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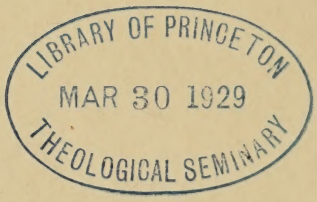


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# THE CHRIST OF ST. MARK

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BY

FREDERIC HOOD

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TO

MY MOTHER

*First published,* 1928

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# FOREWORD

THE purpose of this little book is to try to help some who are not theological students to understand St. Mark's story of Christ better. The method adopted is expository. At the end of each chapter, points are suggested for discussion arising out of the passage with which the chapter has dealt. Many of these points have been referred to in this book, but I have not hesitated to include some into which it has not been possible to enter in a book of this size. Passages from Scripture are quoted generally in the Revised Version, and references are given, except in the case of passages taken from the section of St. Mark's Gospel immediately under consideration. I gratefully acknowledge my debt to a large number of books and articles, and to several friends, especially the Rev. F. L. Cross and the Rev. H. Beevor. My greatest debt of all is to Dr. Rawlinson's Commentary in the Westminster Series, and to Dr. Rawlinson himself for valuable advice and help.

FREDERIC HOOD.

PUSEY HOUSE,
OXFORD,
*August*, 1928.

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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

This book was written at the instance of the English Church Union, which, without taking responsibility for all the statements contained in it, considers it will be helpful to many of its members, as well as to a wider circle.

# CONTENTS

## PART I

### The Preparation and the Ministry


| | PAGE |
|---|---|
| A. INTRODUCTION: MARK I. 1 - - | 1 |
| B. MARK I. 2-13 - - - - | 6 |
| C. MARK I. 14-45 - - - - | 12 |
| D. MARK II. 1–III. 6 - - - - | 18 |
| E. MARK III. 7–IV. 41 - - - - | 24 |
| F. MARK V. 1–VI. 13 - - - - | 31 |
| G. MARK VI. 14–VIII. 26 - - - | 41 |


## PART II

### The Drama of the Passion


| | |
|---|---|
| A. MARK VIII. 27–IX. 29 - - - | 49 |
| B. MARK IX. 30–X. 52 - - - - | 55 |
| C. MARK XI. 1–XII. 17 - - - - | 61 |
| D. MARK XII. 18–XIII. 37 - - - | 67 |
| E. MARK XIV. - - - - - | 73 |
| F. MARK XV. AND XVI. - - - - | 81 |

# THE CHRIST OF ST. MARK

## PART I

## THE PREPARATION AND THE MINISTRY

### A. Introduction: Mark i. 1.

"The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." As the twentieth century proceeds, it emerges more clearly every year that the really vital point at issue among those who are trying to follow our Lord is the question of His deity. "Jesus Christ, the Son of God." What do those words mean? As our study must be closely concerned with the answer to this question, it may be well at the outset to clear our minds with regard to the two views which hold the field. It is only possible to state them in a summary manner, and we cannot here elaborate the various forms in which they are held.

(1) The Liberal Protestant position, as widely held on the continent of Europe, may roughly be stated as follows. God is immanent in nature. The universe is necessary for His self-expression: we cannot conceive of His existence apart from it. Consequently He is "incarnate" in every man, but especially so in good and holy men. Thus He has been specially incarnate in the prophets and saints; but in Jesus of Nazareth there was a supreme incarnation, far greater in degree than any before or since. Indeed, so holy did He become that it is right to call Him divine. He has shown us what God is like, and

has for us the value of God. Though He died, and His body saw corruption, yet He has triumphed spiritually over death. His crucifixion is effective for all time in that the thought of it draws men from sin to holiness. He lives as our example and inspiration. We are to believe and to follow out His simple but inspired teaching, which had for its central theme the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men. We are all sons of God in the same sense as He is, and God desires to be fully incarnate in each of us as He was in Christ. All this is clear from the Synoptic Gospels. These, and especially St. Mark, give on the whole a generally accurate account of the life and teaching of the Master. We shall remember, however, that they were written by simple and credulous people without scientific training; and we shall discount accordingly their stories of the miraculous. Jesus did many cures by suggestion, and by the force of His personality left an impression of supernatural power upon those who knew Him. There is no adequate evidence for supposing that He instituted Baptism; the Last Supper no doubt took place, but it is highly improbable that Jesus intended it to be repeated. In any case, there was no question of a sacrament which conveyed grace. How, then, did the idea of sacraments and the like arise so soon? The usual answer is as follows. Paul and John and others went about in the Græco-Roman world and saw how the Mystery-Religions appealed to the needs of human nature. This made such a deep impression upon them that semi-unconsciously they transformed Christianity into another Mystery-Religion. Jesus became a Redeemer-God, miraculously born, Who died and rose again; by His death the wrath of God against sinful man was appeased. By Baptism one was initiated into the Christian Church with its formal hierarchy, and sin was forgiven. In Holy Communion the Redeemer-God was Himself mysteriously

present, and by feeding on Him one was united with the Deity. On all this mistaken teaching have grown up the elaborate creeds and rites of the Catholic Church. And so, if we are seeking for truth, we must go right "back to Jesus," and study the life and teaching of the simple Galilean prophet, Who never claimed to be God, and knew nothing of an objective redemption, much less of the daily offering of the Mass by a priest claiming succession from those twelve peasants whom He chose to be His friends.

(2) In sharp contrast to this, there is the Catholic position, held by the large majority of Christians (and among these are many who would not call themselves Catholics). God is not only immanent: He is also transcendent, as is revealed in the Old Testament. Man is not necessary to His self-expression. Man is not part of God, but His creature. God has inspired the prophets and saints in varying degrees; but once in time, not without centuries of preparation among many different nations, an utterly stupendous thing happened. God Himself became man. "The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us."* Fittingly† He was born of a pure virgin. He lived without sin, and His life of perfect sacrifice culminated in His atoning offering upon

* John i. 14.

† Of our Lord's birth the Master of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, an eminent scientist, writes: "At that point, of all points, a supernatural view of our Lord's person suggests that there will be some difference from the normal process. I do not say that the supernatural view requires that there should have been a Virgin Birth. What it seems to me it does require—because, if the same things happen in the same way, different things happen in different ways— . . . is that there should have been some great difference, and that difference should have extended to the physical plane. If that is the case, then, in the light of the evidence, difficult as it is at certain points, we should naturally conclude that the difference in question consisted in a Virgin Birth" (Will Spens, *Belief and Practice*, p. 95).

Calvary, by which He opened up for sinful man the way to God. He triumphed over death, rising again with His body, and ever intercedes for us in heaven. The Incarnation is the first, and, as it were, the *only* sacrament. God has actually used a physical body to reveal His character and to convey His life to the world. So—and at this point we begin to part company with traditional Protestantism—now we are incorporated into His mystical Body by water and the Holy Ghost. As the sap wells up in the branches of a vine, or the blood flows from the heart through the veins, so His very life is actually conveyed to us through the simple gifts of bread and wine. Jesus is not a dead prophet: He lives now, both God and man, and is with us in the Holy Sacrament as truly as He was with the apostles of old.* His healing power for the whole being—for body, mind, and spirit—is truly available today. The creeds are merely the articulation of the New Testament teaching. To the priesthood is delegated the authority given by our Lord to the Church to remit and to retain sins, and continually to plead in the Eucharist the all-atoning Sacrifice. St. Paul and St. John truly interpreted the mind of their Master.

I have stated these two positions in clear-cut terms, because it is very necessary in studying St. Mark's Gospel to have them before our minds. The former position is constantly put forward in modern non-Catholic literature; and often it is hard to tell whether the writer really accepts the full deity of Christ or not.†

* The parallelism between our Lord's presence during His life on earth and His presence in the Holy Sacrament is sometimes denied. For an effective answer, see Holmes, *The Glory of God in the Incarnation of the Word*, pp. 91 *f.*

† See, for instance, Fosdick, *The Modern Use of the Bible.* A careful reading of this book reveals that the writer rejects the Catholic doctrine of the Incarnation. On p. 271 he writes: "Jesus was divine, the revelation of the living God Who seeks to be incarnate in every one of us."

As we study the Gospel of St. Mark, then, let us see whether we find the story of One Who was truly God—the very Christ Whom the Catholic Church worships and adores, and by the merits of Whose life and death the penitent is cleansed from sin in Baptism and in Absolution—or whether the Gospel is merely the story of an inspired prophet who lived and died 1,900 years ago.

* * * * *

St. Mark's Gospel is the earliest record which we have of the life of the Master. It was probably written at Rome not more than about thirty-five years after the Resurrection, at the time of the persecution under Nero. Christians were suffering ghastly torments, and two of the victims were St. Peter and St. Paul. There is little doubt that the statement of an early second-century writer (Papias) that St. Mark derived much of his information from St. Peter is correct. A careful study of the contents of the Gospel supports this theory. One of St. Mark's main purposes is to give to missionary workers a manual for propaganda.

1. What is meant by revelation?
2. A beautiful sunset says, "Be natural." The Eucharist says, "Be supernatural."
3. "We speak of Him as divine, because He symbolises for us all the best experiences of all good men and women, and not only symbolises them, but is for most people the door through which they enter into those experiences."* Is this adequate?
4. Is it consistent to believe in the deity of Christ and not in the sacrament of Penance? (Cf. Mark ii. 10.)
5. "Furthermore, it is *necessary to everlasting salvation* that he also believe rightly† the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ."
6. In what respects is the second Gospel distinctive?

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* Harold Anson, *Spiritual Healing*, p. 69.

† The Latin word translated "rightly" literally means "faithfully."

## B. Mark i. 2-13.

St. Mark begins his Gospel with a vivid picture of the last and greatest prophet of the old dispensation. "All the country of Judæa and all they of Jerusalem" were flocking to Jordan to receive Baptism for the remission of their sins. And "Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptised." We are at once faced with a problem. Had Jesus sinned? If not, why did He need Baptism? According to the first evangelist, our Lord explained that it was fitting for a Jew to "fulfil all righteousness";* but this alone cannot explain the significance of the Baptism. The Synoptists all make it clear that it marks a crisis in our Lord's life. Now, it is a striking fact that nowhere throughout the records which we have of Christ is there any hint that He was conscious of sin.† This in itself is an indication of His deity, or at least it illustrates the truth of the old dilemma *Aut deus, aut homo non bonus*. What other good man in history was unaware of his own sin?‡ We shall seek, therefore, for an explanation of the consent of the sinless One to be baptised. We are told by St. Luke that our Lord as a boy grew not only in stature, but also in wisdom.§ God the Son chose so to limit Himself in His earthly life that He grew and developed both in mind and body as a normal human

* Matt. iii. 15.

† Few will agree with Middleton Murry, who writes of our Lord: "In His later words, we hear beyond all doubt the voice of one who has known sin, and the consciousness of sin, and the joy in heaven over the sinner that repenteth" (*The Life of Jesus*, p. 31).

‡ Mohammed claimed to be God's messenger, but he prayed for the forgiveness of his own sins.

§ Luke ii. 52.

boy. During His thirty years at Nazareth, He was gradually learning more and more about His Father's will. He knew when He was twelve years old that He must be "among the concerns of His Father." But we must notice that when He was found among the doctors in the Temple, He was not instructing them, but "both hearing them and asking them questions,"* and they "were amazed at His understanding and His answers."† Only gradually did He learn what the business of His Father was, that He was destined to be the Christ, the anointed King of Israel. He studied and prayed and waited, with unfailing intuition and nothing to mar His union with His Father, patiently working at His lowly trade, growing by the daily exercise of free choice from perfect innocence to perfect holiness. At last He realised that the time had come. After an interval of more than 400 years a true prophet, recognised as such,‡ had arisen—the Baptist, whose stern message now burst upon His ears. "The kingdom of God is at hand." The new Elijah had come. Israel was being urgently called to repentance. John was telling of One greater than himself Who was to baptise with the Holy Ghost. So Jesus felt the divine call *to identify Himself with His sinful race.* Here was the culmination of the long period of preparation. He, the all-holy, therefore submitted to the rite, and with the sinners was baptised by John in Jordan, and "straightway coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens rent asunder, and the Spirit as a dove descending upon Him: and a voice came out of the heavens, Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased."

This whole story must be understood in the light of current Rabbinical teaching. "In our Lord's time," writes Dr. Rawlinson, "men thought of a

* Luke ii. 46. † Luke ii. 47. ‡ Mark xi. 32.

*number of successive* ' *heavens* ' as extending upwards, one above the other, beyond the visible ' firmament ' or sky. Far above the highest of these ' in light unapproachable ' (cf. 1 Tim. vi. 16) dwelt the Most High: and what was heard upon earth was at most only the *echo* of His voice. But the Rabbis taught that there *were* times when the heavens were opened and the ' echo ' of the Divine Voice (*Bath Qol*—lit. ' Daughter of the Voice ') was allowed to be heard. . . . What is of particular interest . . . for Christian readers is the fact that the *Bath Qol* appears sometimes to have been identified with the Holy Spirit, or spoken of as the Holy Spirit's Voice, and the further facts that both *Bath Qol* and the Holy Spirit are associated, in different rabbinical contexts, with the symbolism of a dove. It would seem, then, that if a Jewish Christian teacher wished to give vivid expression to the thought that our Lord, at the moment of His Baptism, received from the heavenly Father a spiritual assurance which made Him finally certain of His Messianic ' call,' the symbolism of Spirit, Dove, and heavenly Voice would be the natural one for him to use."* This does not, to my mind, suggest in any way that the story as it stands fails to represent the facts as they happened. The symbolism is not only the natural one for a Jewish Christian teacher to use: it also suggests the natural form which the vision and "audition" would take, whether subjectively in the mind of the incarnate Christ, steeped as it was in the teaching of the Rabbis, or (as seems more probable) made objective so that those around beheld and heard and wondered. St. Mark does not tell us that anyone except our Lord Himself saw the vision or heard the voice. St. Matthew rather suggests a subjective experience: "The heavens were opened *unto Him*, and He

* *The Gospel according to St. Mark*, Westminster Commentaries, p. 10.

saw."* But St. Luke speaks of the Holy Ghost as descending "in a bodily form":† and Christian tradition is certainly in favour of an objective experience. Perhaps Swete is right in suggesting that "the Voice was audible or articulate only to those who had 'ears to hear.'"‡

"Thou art My beloved Son." Here, then, was the final assurance of our Lord's unique vocation. He knew now without any doubt what the "concerns of His Father" were. His Father's business was the proclamation of the new dispensation, the "kingdom of God," of which John the Baptist preached. The Holy Spirit of Wisdom came down upon Him, and filled Him with power for the ministry which was before Him. The dove, the symbol of the people of Israel,§ hailed Him as the ideal Israelite, the Servant of Jehovah,‖ the all-perfect representative destined to suffer for His people. Moreover, it may well be that in Jordan the full horror of sin swept as a ghastly cloud over the spotless mind of the incarnate Christ. At His Baptism, then, we think of Christ as the anointed King of Israel, fully conscious of His kingship and all that it implied in a sinful world; and as Redeemer, fully conscious of the price which only He could pay for the redemption of the world.

"And straightway the Spirit driveth Him forth into the wilderness." Jesus came up from Jordan filled with the Spirit, with power and authority for the ministry which lay before Him: but it would seem

* Matt. iii. 16. But there is some authority for omitting the words "unto Him."

† Luke iii. 22.

‡ *The Gospel according to St. Mark*, p. 9. (Cf. John v. 37, xii. 29.)

§ In this connexion see the article "Jonah" in *Encyclopedia Biblica*.

‖ See Isa. xlii. 1-4, xlix. 1-6, l. 4-9, lii. 13-liii. 12. These passages constitute what are called the "Servant-Songs."

that He was strongly impelled to a period of fasting first. It was necessary even for the incarnate God to take steps to mortify His body by fasting and prayer. St. Mark clearly believed that our Lord was tempted by a personal Devil (whose continued activity in our modern world is evident enough).* He gives no details of the nature of the temptations. Probably they included the natural temptations of the flesh; there is no evidence for supposing that our Lord was free from such temptations, nor does it appear in any way unedifying to suppose that He fought and conquered them. He was " in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin."†

The temptations actually recorded by the first and third evangelists, however, are not of this class. Two of them are temptations to exercise His divine power, which He had voluntarily restrained, in the first case to satisfy His own hunger, in the second case to compel belief by means of a stupendous miracle; the third is the age-long temptation to take our ethical standards from the standards current in the age in which we live. Because Jesus never compromised with sin at all, and also because of all men He was the most sensitive, His temptation was harder than that which any man has ever suffered. Dr. Westcott, commenting on Heb. vii. 26, wrote these penetrating words: " Sympathy with temptation does not require the experience of sin. On the contrary, his sympathy will be the fullest who has known the extremest power of temptation because he has conquered. He who yields to temptation has not known its uttermost force."‡ By discipline and suffering and silent communion with His Father in the wilderness our Lord was storing up that amazing calm which is one of the most striking features of His character as St. Mark portrays it.

* Cf. pp. 14 *ff.* † Heb. iv. 15.
‡ Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 193.

"And the angels ministered unto Him." The mind of one who is living in close union with God unspoilt by the darkness of sin is ever open to the intuitive realisation of the presence of ministering spirits, and especially at times of stress—though, even from the greatest saint, this joy is sometimes withdrawn. It would seem that at the end of our Lord's period of fasting He was specially aware of the presence of the angels. I do not think that this particular remark has the evidential value which Swete suggests when he writes: "Such a ministration, while it attests the human weakness of the Lord, bears witness to His Sonship."*

We may conclude our brief study of the Temptation by noticing that for St. Mark the period of forty days spent by the Messiah in the wilderness was very likely typified by the forty years spent by the people of Israel in the wilderness after they had passed through the Red Sea.

NOTE.—In *Theology* for February, 1928, Mr. Lindsay Dewar makes the original suggestion that the imagery of our Lord's temptations comes to us from His dreams. "All day long these temptations were present, and He was wrestling with them; so that even when He lay down to sleep, they would still be with Him. In the silent hours of the night they would clothe themselves in vivid imagery, and renew the assault with redoubled fury; and our suggestion is that it is in this form they have been handed on by Him to us, so that we might understand, as it were in parabolic form, something of what He suffered for our sakes then."

1. The relation of John's baptism to Christian Baptism (Mark i. 8; Acts xix. 1-6).
2. The significance of Christ's Baptism by John.
3. The nature of the Temptation, and its bearing upon our temptations.
4. In what sense were prophecies fulfilled in Christ?
5. Does a personal Devil exist?
6. If Christ was incapable of sinning, how could He be tempted?

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* P. 12.

## C. Mark i. 14-45.

Tradition and the best modern scholarship are agreed in regarding the Marcan account of our Lord's ministry as a collection of detached stories. These are often linked together by St. Mark's favourite word "straightway." When the evangelist has accurate information with regard to chronology, he gives it (as in ix. 2: "After six days"): but it is not possible to assume that all the events recorded happened in the order in which they are given. It is, in any case, very unlikely that such accurate chronology would be preserved in oral tradition. In the days before books were printed, memories were far more vivid than they are today for events and sayings which were of interest or importance, but their exact order would not be of enough interest to be retained. The evangelist has information, however, about the date of the beginning of our Lord's ministry. We saw Christ last among the wild beasts in the wilderness—probably what is now called the *Quarantania*, a great limestone height a thousand feet above the plain of Jericho. Now He appears far north of this in Galilee, His home country, "after that John was delivered up." The activity of the second Elijah is accomplished: the work of the Anointed One now begins. The kernel of His first teaching is given at once: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the gospel." The Messiah has come "to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."*

The Christ came up from His Baptism in Jordan, as we saw, with authority for His great work; and that

* Luke iv. 18.

is the dominant note of the chapter which we are considering. The calling of Simon and Andrew, and that of James and John, are the first recorded instances of the startling effect which the personality of Jesus had. It is a point which we must constantly notice throughout the Gospel record. It is, I believe, from this that belief in the deity of Christ first arose. As we shall see, this "numinous" impression, as it has been called,* becomes still more striking during the last weeks of our Lord's life, when the thought of the passion was filling His mind. But already at the outset of His ministry we behold the Lamb of God, Who taketh away the sins of the world.† Already the abandonment to sacrifice has begun. He has left His beloved mother and home and friends to do His Father's will. He, Who was the agent in creation, has not where to lay His head. To come into the presence of Jesus was an experience wholly unparalleled; and we shall see that often it caused actual fear. "Come ye after Me," the Master says to Simon and Andrew, "and I will make you to become fishers of men. And straightway they left the nets, and followed Him." They were simple, unsophisticated peasants, "little children" in the Gospel sense; the wicked and coarse things of the world had not yet blunted their childlike susceptibilities: so the magnetism of the all-holy One drew them to this act of sacrifice, which culminated for both of them on the gallows. Even more pathetic is the picture of the old man Zebedee, left by the "sons of thunder" in the boat with the hired servants, while his own children went away with the Master to learn to be fishers of men.

There follows an account of a typical Sabbath day. The scene is the little fishing town of Capernaum,

* Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, chap. ii.

† Cf. John i. 29. Note that the word translated "taketh away" may mean "beareth" (R.V. margin).

by the Sea of Galilee; and still the emphasis is on the messianic *authority* of Christ. He attended the service in the synagogue, which would be not unlike Morning Prayer in the Church of England,* and, as was quite customary, He was invited by the ruler of the synagogue to give the sermon. The congregation heard something altogether unlike what they had been accustomed to hearing from the scribes. He spoke with authority and inspiration. The people realised that they were in the presence of someone arrestingly impressive, and "they were astonished."

Christ's authority is then further illustrated by an account of His control over unclean spirits. "By the Spirit of God"† poured out upon Him at His Baptism, He exorcised devils. There was "a man with an unclean spirit." This phrase was used to denote many different conditions. According to current beliefs, one who suffered from such familiar diseases as epilepsy or *dementia præcox*, or even acute neurasthenia, was said to be possessed. But this undoubted fact by no means excludes the fact of actual possession in numerous cases. It is all too common among modern writers to regard "possession" as a category wholly out of date. It is sad to find this view dogmatically expressed by a writer whose books have such a large circulation as Dr. Fosdick's. He alludes, for instance, to "mental categories which we no longer use in ordinary life, like demonology, angelology, Semitic cosmology, or miracles."‡ Again: "Devils may exist, but their functions are gone."§ If such writers as this would investigate impartially the experiences of Catholic missionaries and of many misguided spiritists, they would have food for thought. Dr. Fosdick anticipates some such criti-

* See J. Paterson Smyth, *A People's Life of Christ*, pp. 159 *ff.*

† Matt. xii. 28. ‡ *Op. cit.*, p. 89. § *Ibid.*, p. 117.

cism, but he only meets it with a *petitio principii*. "Wherever modern doubt of demons comes in, the phenomena of diabolical possession go out."* In other words, those who on *a priori* grounds doubt the possibility of possession by devils explain the facts in some other way. This does not take us far towards deciding which explanation is the true one.† Another non-Anglican writer, Mr. E. R. Micklem, more wisely writes: "It is important not to ignore the fact that sober-minded observers find it hard to avoid the conclusion that the term 'demon possession' is an accurate description of the malady."‡ The more demonology is studied, the more complex and sinister the subject is seen to be, and the less ready one is to brush aside dogmatically the possibility of possession.§ It seems probable that the account in this chapter is of an actual case of possession. The evangelist believed that the evil spirit, belonging as it did to the supernatural world, recognised the messiahship, perhaps even the divinity of Jesus, before men had learnt to do so. "I know Thee Who Thou art, the Holy One of God." There is no great difficulty in believing that this was so. Mr. Micklem remarks that "if . . . the state of 'possession' is a psychological state in which the subject displays a heightened 'sensibility' similar to that manifested by a person in a trance, the recognition of our Lord by the demoniacs becomes easily intelligible."‖ Jesus spoke with authority: "Be muzzled, and come out of him." It is of interest to note that the demoniac had a convulsion before the devil departed

* *Ibid.*, p. 117.

† Some of these comments appeared in a review of Dr. Fosdick's book by the present writer in *Theology* for March, 1925.

‡ *Miracles and the New Psychology*, p. 62.

§ See, for instance, Montague Summers, *The History of Witchcraft and Demonology*, *passim*.

‖ *Op. cit.*, p. 73.

from him.* "And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves saying, What is this? a new teaching! With authority He commandeth even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him."

The account of this Sabbath day closes with the story of the healing of Peter's mother-in-law, and of many healings and exorcisms at sundown. A great crowd collected, and we get a vivid impression of the Master's compassion. "And in the morning, a great while before day, He rose up, and departed into a desert place, and there prayed." Here is the secret of our Lord's power and of His radiant calm, which we see throughout the Gospel. It presents a striking contrast to the so-called calm exhibited by the Stoics, which was really callousness.† The human Jesus attained this calm by constant communion with His Father. Whatever work was urgently waiting to be done, long periods set apart for prayer must not be omitted. The chapter ends with the touching story

* This has a bearing on the problem of Spiritual Healing (see pp. 35 *ff.*). In my own experience I know of a case of healing by sacramental means, in which the patient struggled between life and death for ten days *after* Unction had been administered. From that time he steadily improved, and eventually completely recovered.

† Compare a passage describing the Stoic Wise Man, in Edwyn Bevan, *Stoics and Sceptics*, p. 67:

"Pity, in the sense of a painful emotion caused by the sight of other men's suffering, is actually a vice. The most that can be allowed when the Wise Man goes to console a mourner is that he should feign sympathy as a means of attaining his object, but he must take care not to feel it. He may sigh, Epictetus says, provided the sigh does not come from his heart. In the service of his fellow men he must be prepared to sacrifice his health, to sacrifice his possessions, to sacrifice his life; but there is one thing he must never sacrifice—his own eternal calm."

It is interesting in this connexion to compare the effect of suffering on a devout Catholic with its effect on a Christian Scientist. I think it is not unfair to say that the tendency of the latter cult is to produce callousness instead of sympathy

of the cleansing of the man with that most loathsome disease, leprosy. The leper was breaking the law in speaking to Jesus at all. He is confident of Christ's *power* to heal, but *will* He heal him? He implores Him on his bended knees to do so: and the tender heart of Jesus is at once "moved with compassion." He even touched the poor creature, involving Himself thereby in ceremonial defilement. But when He had healed him, He was very strict indeed about the necessity of his carrying out the requirements of the Law. He also strongly urged secrecy upon him. The fact that the cleansed leper did not observe this had the result that "Jesus could no more openly enter into a city, but was without in desert places: and they came to Him from every quarter."

NOTE ON DEMON POSSESSION.—Dr. A. T. Schofield, the eminent psycho-therapist, has an interesting chapter* on "possession" in his book *Modern Spiritism*, which is now out of print. "'Possession' by an evil spirit," he writes, "is tacitly recognised by most of our alienists. There is no large asylum that does not contain one or more of such cases. These people are often otherwise sane, but are constantly liable to have their bodies used, against their will, by some alien and evil force." Dr. Schofield clearly distinguishes between this phenomenon and that of "double, multiple, and alternating personalities." He gives examples from his own experience of cases of "possession." Perhaps the most striking is that of a pious maiden lady, who lived with her sister at Bayswater, whom Dr. Schofield found "pouring out blasphemies and obscenities with an ease and rapidity that bespoke long practice. The language used and the animus displayed against God were as remarkable as they were horrible." Her sister declared that to her certain knowledge she had "never even heard the fearful words she was using so volubly. They had never been in the East End, or visited among the poor, and had led sheltered lives." This case was cured by prayer. No doubt theories other than that of "possession" could be educed to explain this and numerous other cases, but the *onus* of such explanation is on those who disagree with the majority of experts.

* Chap. vii.

1. Why did Jesus choose peasants to be His disciples?
2. Do you believe in possession by devils?
3. What bearing have the phenomena of modern Spiritism on the story of the exorcism related in this chapter?
4. If Jesus was God, why did He pray?
5. What do you know of Jewish worship in our Lord's day?
6. Why did Jesus so often command secrecy?

## D. Mark ii. 1–iii. 6.

This section consists of a series of stories collected to illustrate the increasing hostility of the Pharisees to Jesus. "After some days" He returned to Capernaum, and crowds again besieged the house where He was. A paralytic was brought to Him. The sick man's friends were so full of faith and anxious not to miss an interview with Jesus that they let the patient down through the roof. Jesus says, "Child,* thy sins are forgiven." The scribes who were there mentally accused Him of blasphemy, because He claimed to forgive sin. Jesus, with unfailing intuition, reads their thoughts, and proceeds to prove His power to forgive sin by healing the paralytic's body. This story is deeply interesting in many ways. The comments of the three evangelists on it show what an impression the incident made. St. Matthew says: "When the multitudes saw it, they were afraid, and glorified God, Which had given such power unto men."† St. Mark has: "They were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion."‡ St. Luke has: "Amazement took hold on all, and they glorified God; and they were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things

* R.V. margin. † Matt. ix. 8.
‡ Mark ii. 12.

today."* Clearly it was something more than the mere healing which produced this effect. They were "eyewitnesses of His majesty."† They "beheld His glory"‡—that glory which could only belong to the only-begotten of the Father, so full was He of grace and truth.

In this passage we find for the first time in the Gospel the phrase "Son of man." It is as "Son of man" that Jesus claims authority to forgive sin. During the period between the Old and the New Testaments this phrase which in the Old Testament had been used as a synonym for "man" had come to have a special connotation. It had come to mean "a supernatural 'man,' pre-existent in heaven from all eternity with God, a Being who was identified with the 'Anointed,' the 'Elect' or the 'Righteous One' of Jewish expectation, and who was regarded as destined to come with the clouds, and to exercise judgement as the Agent and Representative of God."§ On the lips of our Lord it is a term both of humility and of supernatural glory. The Son of man is the servant of all, Who has come not to be ministered unto, but to minister, who has not where to lay His head, and yet He is the Lord of the Sabbath, Who speaks with the authority of God Himself, and is to be the final Judge of the world.

"The Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins." Already we have the principle underlying the Church's doctrine of absolution in the sacraments of Baptism and Penance. In the new dispensation inaugurated by the Incarnation, God conveys His pardon to the penitent through the agency of His representative on earth.‖

* Luke v. 26. † 2 Pet. i. 16.
‡ John i. 14. § Rawlinson, p. liv.

‖ The authority to absolve from sin is inherent in the Church (John xx. 23). It is used primarily in Baptism and secondarily in Penance, the extension of Baptism. The

If we are to understand this Gospel aright, it is important to guard against any theory of the Incarnation which thinks of Christ simply as God the Son walking about in human flesh. We not only find Christ's perfect deity on the pages of this Gospel: we also find His perfect humanity. The use of the phrase "Son of man" in this passage, together with the pertinent comment of the first evangelist—they "glorified God, Which had given such power unto men"*—illustrates what we must bear in mind throughout, that Christ forgave sins and performed His healings and exorcisms as perfect Man in the power of the Holy Spirit poured upon Him in Jordan.† He did not heal the sick and cast out devils by a mere fiat of the divine will, without effort or cost to Himself. This leads us on to the vast and enthrallingly interesting subject of the relation of the divine and the human natures in our Lord. To discuss it thoroughly is out of the question in a book of this size. Nevertheless, we cannot wholly ignore it. It is of far more than academic interest; and every intelligent Christian who meditates regularly on the Gospels must have some working Christology, if only for devotional purposes. The Church has been characteristically restrained in what she has laid down as of faith in this matter. The culmination of the controversies which beset the Church during the first five centuries was the Definition of the Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451), where we find these words: "We all unanimously teach that our Lord Jesus Christ is to us one and the same Son, the self-same perfect in Godhead, the self-same perfect in Manhood, truly God and truly Man . . . One and the

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authority to baptise is delegated by the Church even to unbaptised persons (so necessary is that sacrament). The authority to absolve in the sacrament of Penance is given only to bishops and priests. (See the English Ordinal.)

* Matt. ix. 8. † Cf. Acts x. 38.

same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-Begotten, acknowledged in two Natures, unconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably." Provided that a Catholic Christian accepts this, he is free to think out for himself from the Gospel story the detailed application of it. To many who are seriously attempting to arrive at a true and consistent theory of the Person of Christ, it is increasingly difficult to believe, as used commonly to be taken for granted, that our Lord in His earthly life sometimes acted "as man," and sometimes "as God."*

* This view may be illustrated by quoting a famous passage from the Tome of Leo: "He Who as man is tempted by the Devil's craft is the same that is ministered unto by angels as God. To feel hunger, thirst and weariness, and to sleep, is evidently human; but to satisfy thousands of men with five loaves, and to bestow living water on the Samaritan woman, the drinking of which would cause her who drank it to thirst no more; to walk on the surface of the sea with feet which did not sink, and to allay the 'rising billows' by rebuking the tempest, is without doubt divine. As then, to omit many other examples, it does not belong to the same nature to weep in an emotion of pity for a dead friend, and to raise that same friend from the dead with a word of power, after the stone over the tomb where he had been for four days buried had been removed, or to hang on the wood and, changing the light into darkness, to make all elements tremble; or, to be pierced with nails and to open the gates of Paradise to the faith of the robber;—so it does not belong to the same nature to say, 'I and the Father are One' and 'The Father is greater than I.' For although in the Lord Jesus Christ there is one Person of God and man, yet that whence the suffering is common to both is one thing, and that whence the glory is common to both is another, for from us He has the humanity inferior to the Father, and from the Father He has the Divinity equal to the Father." The Tome of Leo (A.D. 449) is printed in English in T. H. Bindley, *The Œcumenical Documents of the Faith.* It should be read in full if St. Leo's teaching is to be thoroughly understood. The Tome is an authoritative document in that it was chosen by the Council of Chalcedon to illustrate its Definition. It is wholly out of accordance with the great restraint which the Church has always shown in laying down dogmas as *of faith* to suppose that Christians are bound to accept every word of this or of other illustrative

I propose here to state an alternative theory, which wholly avoids this " dualism " in our Lord's incarnate life, and shows us a Christ Who is not only our redeemer, but also truly our example. As we proceed with our study of the Gospel, we shall see how this theory works out.

It would seem that, when the eternal pre-existent Son of God became man in time, to redeem a sinful race, He chose by a voluntary act of self-restraint so to limit Himself that He lived fully under the conditions of real manhood; that He never employed in His earthly life the divine omnipotence or omniscience which were His by right; that He never performed a work essentially different from the works which He intended man to be able to do in the power of His Holy Spirit; that He never added out of the divine omniscience to the historical or scientific knowledge current at the time in which He lived.

That the miracles of healing and of exorcism were performed by Christ not in the exercise of unmediated Godhead, but as Man, seems hardly open to question, if the Gospel record, and especially the Marcan record, is to be trusted. The " nature miracles " we shall consider as they arise. In the story of the healing of the paralytic, as we have seen, the Master emphasises His manhood by using the phrase " Son of man ": and we noticed in the last chapter the paroxysm of the demoniac after the Master had spoken, which does not point to the miracle being performed without effort, by a mere fiat of the divine will. So far from

documents. While fully accepting the essential doctrine of the two natures in one divine Person, we are free to ponder on the implications of this doctrine. Dr. S. H. Scott, in a little book called *Anglo-Catholicism and Reunion*, maintains that such a theory about the Person of Christ as that tentatively propounded in these pages ought not to be held, because it is a bar to reunion. But no effective reunion can take place except on a basis of truth: therefore, honest attempts to arrive at truth are contributions towards ultimate reunion.

detracting from the full splendour of the Incarnation, this belief in our Lord's voluntary self-limitation adds immeasurably to the vastness of His sacrifice. He Who for all eternity is infinitely rich in wisdom and power became poor, because God so loved the world.

* * * * *

From the healing of the paralytic, the Gospel goes on to relate the call of the publican Levi, and to tell of Jesus welcoming sinners and outcasts and the oppressed, and eating with them, thus showing them great friendship. The Anointed One has come not to call those who "need no repentance," but to be the friend of sinners. The section ends with our Lord's teaching about fasting and about the Sabbath. "The Son of man is lord even of the Sabbath": and on that day in the synagogue He healed the man with a withered hand. This increased His unpopularity, and "the Pharisees went out, and straightway with the Herodians took counsel against Him, how they might destroy Him."

NOTE.—I have attempted above to put forward a theory which avoids the difficult thought of our Lord acting sometimes "as God" and sometimes "as man." It may be replied that an equally unedifying "dualism" actually remains. How could the Word of God continue to uphold the Universe during the period of His humiliation? The problem is that presented by the words of the well-known hymn, "The Word of God proceeding forth, Yet leaving not His Father's side." Actually the problem is insoluble (like that of the relation o the divine foreknowledge to human free-will, which is raised every Sunday in Hyde Park), precisely because our finite minds cannot conceive of timelessness. Inevitably we tend to think of eternity as a long time-series, and consequently we think of the thirty years of our Lord's life on earth as a period taken, as it were, out of eternity. The fact is that Christ *upholds* the Universe (not that He did and does and will); and it is inconceivable that for any period He should cease to do so. Further than this it seems profitless to try to probe.

1. In what respects has God given supernatural authority to men?
2. Compare Mark ii. 26 with 1 Sam. xxi. 1-6. What bearing has this comparison upon the doctrine of inspiration?
3. What was Christ's teaching about Sabbath observance? Has this any connexion with the Christian's observance of Sunday?
4. What did our Lord mean when He called Himself "the Son of man"?
5. Was Jesus in full possession of divine omnipotence and omniscience throughout His life on earth?

6. "The Word of God proceeding forth,
Yet leaving not His Father's side."

## E. Mark iii. 7–iv. 41.

While the hostility of the scribes and Pharisees increased, our Lord was becoming more and more popular among the people. A great multitude from every part of Palestine flocked to Him. He performed many more works of healing, and the unclean spirits recognised Him as Son of God.

Those who had "scourges" pressed upon Him to touch Him, believing that healing power went out from Him. This belief seems indeed to have been justified (cf. Mark v. 30, vi. 56): but the healing did not occur without tiring Jesus: He knew that "power proceeding from Him had gone forth." So pressing did the crowds become that He had to teach from a little boat. We see next the King of Israel choosing the twelve apostles, symbolising the twelve tribes of Israel.

There follow two passages interwoven, pointing the contrast "between the well-meant, if mistaken, anxiety of Jesus' friends, and the malicious and hostile calumny of His enemies."* The Master pronounces

* Rawlinson, p. 43.

a stern indictment on "the scribes which came down from Jerusalem." They assert that He casts out devils by the power of Beelzebub, the prince of the devils, by whom they say that He is possessed. They accuse Him, in fact, of black magic. He replies unanswerably, and drives home His answer with the forcible words, "Verily I say unto you, All their sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and their blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: but whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never* forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin." It was in the power of the Holy Spirit that Christ performed His exorcisms. To say that this work of God was due to possession by Satan was to blaspheme against God's Holy Spirit: it revealed a state of mind so deliberately perverse and directed away from God that those who said it were indeed guilty of an eternal sin. Whether there is an element of intentional hyperbole in this as in other sayings of our Lord, we dare not judge. We must not "water down" the plain meaning of the words, introduced as they are by the emphatic "Verily I say unto you," used here for the first time in this Gospel.

Side by side with this is the account of the visit of Jesus' mother and brothers. It is easy to misunderstand this incident, and the passages (iii. 19*b*-21 and iii. 31-35) should be studied carefully. Rumours were doubtless current to the effect that Jesus was mad. It would be surprising if it had not been so. St. Paul† and many other great prophets and enthusiasts have been similarly accused. There is also in the East thought to be a special connexion between madmen and the Deity. Jesus' relations had heard the rumour, and were terribly worried. We can imagine something of the state of mind of His lonely

* There is considerable manuscript evidence for a reading which would give the translation "not" instead of "never" here.

† Acts xxvi. 24.

mother, even before this rumour reached her.* Her tender heart was now nearly breaking, and she could not resist making one attempt to save Him from the persecution and danger which she so clearly foresaw. Bravely, then, she went to the house (probably St. Peter's at Capernaum). St. Joseph is not said to have accompanied her. It may well be that he was dead. But possibly St. Mark, who had given no account of Christ's infancy, is safeguarding the truth of the virginal birth by making no mention of St. Joseph, lest his readers should think of him as our Lord's own father. This is by no means an impossible suggestion, in view of the fact that in a later chapter St. Mark represents the people of Nazareth as saying, "Is not this . . . the son of Mary?"† presumably for dogmatic reasons, since the universal Jewish custom was to refer to a man as the son of his father, not of his mother. We may notice that the phrase is altered by St. Matthew, who had related the story of the Virgin Birth. It is not certain that the mother and brethren of Jesus accepted the story of His insanity. "They said, He is mad," may merely mean, "It was reported that He was mad."‡ Probably they

* N. Micklem writes the following strangely perverse passage on this matter: "If only His mother had stood by Him through those lonely years; if only she had been what tradition would make out! We can imagine the heart-sickness which was His when He said that whoever does God's will is His mother and sister and brother. . . . His mother had not helped Him; she had made His work much harder for Him; she had tried to prevent it; she had publicly let it be known that she thought Him crazy; she had almost been His enemy" (*The Galilean*, p. 31). Compare a similar passage in Bruce Barton, *The Man Nobody Knows*, pp. 165 *f.* This latter book, which has gone into many editions, is a well-intentioned but pathetic attempt by an American "advertising man" to portray the historic Christ in terms of his own ideal of a superman.

† Mark vi. 3: cf. Matt. xiii. 55; Luke iv. 22; John vi. 42. Cf. also Ronald Knox, *Some Loose Stones*, p. 45.

‡ For the impersonal "they" cf. Mark ii. 18, iii. 2.

were so overwrought that they hardly knew what to believe, and felt that they must go and find out for themselves. They sent in a message to Jesus, Who, as usual, was surrounded by a throng of people. When He heard it, He took the opportunity of teaching the people that He had left His home and friends for the sake of His mission, and could not now turn back. "Whosoever shall do the will of God" is now His brother and sister and mother. All His faithful followers both then and in the ages to come were His spiritual kinsfolk. We may notice that the term "father" He never used, except of God. There is no reason whatever to think that our Lord refused on this occasion to see His blessed mother, and we may imagine the agony that He suffered from the conflict between His duty and His deep human love. That Christ's brethren seriously misunderstood Him, just as the apostles did, we need not doubt: and St. Mark may have had in mind a parallelism between this misunderstanding and the rejection of Jesus by His own Jewish nation.

In chapter iv. begins the record of our Lord's teaching in parables. This probably represents a new phase in the Master's methods. The Pharisees and Herodians were plotting against Him. He must go on teaching His disciples: yet to secure privacy was increasingly difficult. "Without a parable spake He not unto them: but privately to His own disciples He expounded all things." He taught now in a way which the crowd would not understand: His own immediate *entourage* might do so, and if they did not, He would explain. Thus the parable of the Sower begins with the arresting "Listen," and ends with the words, "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear." This chapter contains three typical parables, all dealing with "the mystery of the kingdom of God." The Sower reflects the actual results of Christ's own preaching. "The main

lesson is that divine truth is dependent for its fruition upon the receptiveness of the men who hear it."* The parable of the Seed growing secretly tells of the quiet, almost imperceptible influence of spiritual forces, and its far-reaching effect. This leads on to the parable of the Mustard Seed. It tells, like that of the Leaven (which St. Mark does not record), of the Church, which already existed in germ, growing up to be the greatest force for good in a sinful world, the Divine Society against which the gates of hell can never prevail. An infinitesimal seed becomes an enormous plant.

At the end of a day spent in such teaching as this, our Lord is very tired and longs for solitude. With His disciples He leaves the multitude and goes by boat to the other side of the lake. There is a tremendous storm, and the disciples are amazed that Jesus can calmly sleep through it. They awake Him, and immediately the Son of man exercises His authority as lord even of Nature. He speaks, and there is a great calm. We are not surprised to read that "they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?" They were not only impressed by the miracle, but also by the Master's complete calm. Gradually the disciples are learning that they are in the presence of One Who is more than man. This story, perhaps as much as any in the Gospels, seems to give support to the idea that our Lord sometimes directly exercised His divine powers, though I do not believe that such an assumption is necessary even here. At first sight, some might be inclined to assert this more emphatically of St. John's account of the raising of Lazarus. Yet a careful study of that vivid story, every phrase of which has the ring of truth, shows that the miracle was done after tremendous agony as a result of prayer. He was troubled: He

* Shafto, *The Stories of the Kingdom*, p. 57.

wept: He again groaned in Himself: He lifted up His eyes to heaven and said: "Father, I thank Thee that Thou heardest Me."* Again, though the Tome of Leo describes the Walking on the Water as "without doubt divine," yet St. Matthew tells us that St. Peter walked on the water, and that it was only when his faith failed that he began to sink. Dr. William Temple, in his book *Christus Veritas*, asks whether Christ ever made use of powers that were altogether outside the reach of ordinary men. In replying he rightly says that "we simply do not know what power would be possessed by a man who was and always had been in perfect fellowship with God."† But he goes on to say: "Perhaps at the stilling of the storm, and perhaps at the Transfiguration, and certainly (as I should say) at the Feeding of the Multitude, He displayed powers beyond those of man, however inspired. It is noticeable that when He stilled the storm He did not pray to His Father or invoke the divine name; He spoke as the Lord of the elements, and we recall the bewilderment of the Disciples at His doing so." Dr. Temple's view is summed up in the words: "The Divine is working through the human, and normally at least within its limitations."‡ It will be seen that this view would be identical with that which is tentatively put forward in these pages, if the words "normally at least" were omitted. The great difficulty about Dr. Temple's idea as it stands is that, according to it, Christ is indeed our redeemer, but is not completely our example. How, then, are we to explain the stilling of the storm? I believe that it is to be understood in this way. Consider the life of any very saintly man. He foresees certain definite problems which he has to face. About these he may spend hours in prayer and self-denial, and as a result of the time thus spent, he will have grace to deal successfully with the problems. But often in his life

* John xi. 41. † P. 120. ‡ P. 122.

emergencies will arise with which he has to deal at once. There is no time for a great effort of prayer, but because he is living in union with God, because he is the sort of man which he is, he is able to deal with these emergencies. The storm on the lake was an emergency of this kind, and we certainly cannot assume, because of the evangelist's silence, that our Lord did not momentarily lift up His heart to His Father before, acting as perfect Man in the power of the Holy Spirit, He caused the storm to cease.

NOTE.—I have not attempted to discuss the thorny subject of the historicity either of Old Testament miracles or of ecclesiastical miracles in later centuries. Father Ronald Knox remarks: "The miracles of the Old Testament, like the miracles of ecclesiastical history, were normally due, it appears, to an invocation of the Divine Power; our Lord never invokes the Divine Power. Sometimes, indeed, His intervals of silence suggest that He is engaging in mental prayer. But the actual word which heals or commands is His own *ipse dixit*."* Certainly our Lord spoke with authority: but did He never invoke the Divine Power? Consider, for instance, the implications of Mark vii. 34 or John xi. 41. The bearing especially of pre-Christian nature-miracles upon the problem of Christ's miracles deserves careful thought.

1. What is meant by blasphemy against the Holy Spirit?
2. What was our Lord's attitude to His family after His Baptism?
3. What is meant by "the mystery of the kingdom of God"?
4. What does the parable of the Sower teach?
5. How do you explain the stilling of the storm?
6. The bearing of pre-Christian miracles and ecclesiastical miracles upon the records of the miraculous in St. Mark.

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* *The Belief of Catholics*, p. 109.

## F. Mark v. 1–vi. 13.

Jesus failed to find the privacy and peace for which He sought. He landed from the boat, and was met by a dangerous demoniac, apparently a far more serious case than those which He had before encountered. Jesus said: "Come forth, thou unclean spirit, out of the man." But St. Mark tells us that the spirits, who were legion, had a conversation with the Master before they obeyed. (We may compare the lengthy process which the Catholic rite of exorcism often proves to be.*) The literal acceptance of the story of the transference of the devils to the herd of swine and the subsequent disaster has presented more difficulties even to orthodox Christians than perhaps any other incident in the Gospels. We need not enumerate here the various theories which have been put forward to "explain it away," all of which are in the realm of speculation. There is no reason to doubt that the evangelist is recording the story just as he heard it. Even an eyewitness *may* have been mistaken as regards the interpretation of what he saw: and we must not hold so mechanical a theory of inspiration as to exclude the possibility that the exorcism and the panic of the herd of swine were less directly connected than would appear from the narrative. A violent convulsion on the demoniac's part might well be enough to account for the swine's stampede.† If Dr. Rawlinson's view is right that this was a case not of possession, but of delusional in-

* "The Form of Exorcising the Possessed," translated from the Roman Ritual, is printed in Summers, *op. cit.*, pp. 211 *ff.*

† N. Micklem (*op. cit.*, p. 38) remarks: "I am informed that farmers will never have flocks and herds under the care of the village idiot, even though he appear competent for the task. Animals seem to be instinctively aware of madness, and to be afraid of a madman."

sanity, some such view must be adopted. But many of us will be content, with our limited knowledge of that abstruse and sinister subject demonology, to accept the story as it stands, although, in this exceptional case, the Master's purpose may not be altogether clear. The fact that the swine were *allowed* to perish need cause no more surprise than numberless events allowed by God, which readily occur to the mind. And it is important not to over-emphasise the *credulity* of the evangelists with regard to the miraculous. They had no scientific training, it is true, but they recorded quite straightforwardly those things which they had heard and seen. The effect of this exorcism, as we should expect, was that those who saw the dangerous demoniac cured "were afraid. . . . And they began to beseech Him to depart from their borders." They did not want the normal tenor of their lives to be disturbed by these heart-searching experiences. The man who had been healed begged Jesus to allow him to become a disciple. But "He suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go to thy house unto thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee." This is of interest considered in connexion with our Lord's advice to the rich young ruler: "Sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor."* The latter had the vocation to poverty, the former to family life in the world. Christ does not call everyone to leave home and friends in order to serve Him, but He most solemnly requires of all His followers the state of mind which is willing to do so.

Two stories follow, again interwoven. Jesus had returned to the other side of the lake. Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, begged Him to come and heal his little girl, who was dying. As He went, surrounded by a throng of people, a woman with an issue of

* Mark x. 21.

blood, whom tradition has named Veronica, touched Him, and was healed of her "scourge." Her faith in God had been the condition of her cure. It is of interest here to note that our Lord was so sensitive that He was aware of the contact between Himself and a sufferer, yet He was unaware of the patient's identity. By means of this contact our Lord became ceremonially unclean, and His disregard of this has a bearing on His attitude towards the Law.* Meanwhile a message arrives to say that Jairus' daughter has died. Jesus denies this fact, and it is really hard to say whether we have here an actual case of raising from the dead or not. Certainly our Lord treats it with exceptional solemnity, taking with Him only the chosen three, who are later to be witnesses of the Transfiguration. The moment of death, however, is not always easy to determine even in the twentieth century, and it is not impossible that we have here a case of suspended animation. It is interesting to compare with it the account of St. Paul's raising of Eutychus.† It is recorded that he was "taken up dead": yet St. Paul asserted, "His life is in him."

The story which follows of our Lord's visit to Nazareth is a very pathetic one. He encounters an atmosphere of unbelief: even His brethren were offended at Him. We must pause to enquire who these brethren were. Two of the brethren referred to in this passage are named James and Joses. At the Crucifixion, among the women "beholding from afar" was "Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses,"‡ who also "beheld where He was laid,"§ and "bought spices."‖ The evangelist clearly distinguishes this Mary from our Lord's own mother, and yet she is said to be the mother of our Lord's

* As in the case of the leper, p. 17.
† Acts xx. 9 *f.*
‡ Mark xv. 40.
§ Mark xv. 47.
‖ Mark xvi. 1.

brethren.* Now, St. John tells us that "there were standing by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Clopas."† This all points to the conclusion that the brethren of Christ were in fact His first cousins. If this is so, there is nothing in St. Mark's Gospel to throw doubt on the strong tradition which exists in favour of the perpetual virginity of our Lady. It is commonly held that the word translated "brethren" can fairly be rendered "cousins."‡ Though there does not appear to be another instance of such a rendering in the New Testament, there are several in the Old Testament.§ The whole subject is one about which much has been written. Many have held that the brethren were the children of Joseph by a former wife, and this presents no difficulty with regard to the translation of the Greek. We must be content to leave the matter open.‖

To continue—it would seem that our Lord chose to exercise such voluntary restraint during His life on earth that His power to work miracles lay under certain limitations. So, owing to the unbelief at Nazareth at which "He marvelled," He could do no mighty work, "save that He laid His hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them." This passage has an interesting bearing upon the modern problem of spiritual healing, as we shall see later in this chapter.

The Twelve are now sent forth two by two on their mission to Israel; and Christ gives them authority to

* Assuming, that is, that there were not two distinct pairs of brothers referred to by St. Mark, named James and Joses.

† John xix. 25.

‡ See, for instance, a note signed *Discipulus* in the *O.U.C.U. Gazette* for December, 1919.

§ *E.g.*, Lev. x. 4; 1 Chron. xxiii. 21-22 (Septuagint).

‖ If any reader desires to pursue this intricate subject, he can do so by reading the articles entitled "Brethren of the Lord" in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible* and Hastings' *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*.

exorcise. With this intention they were chosen.* We read that they "anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them." The original reason for the use of oil was certainly therapeutic. Our Lord does not seem to have employed it Himself in His works of healing. But the passage which we are considering, combined with the interesting verses of the Epistle of St. James (v. 13-15), shows that the "'sacrament of unction' has its roots in the New Testament."† What, then, was our Lord's intention with regard to the continuance in His Church of the practice of healing the body? This is a matter of acute controversy in this century, and it may be well to close this chapter with an attempt briefly to answer this question.

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In actual practice the Church continued to carry out our Lord's command to heal the sick among her other ministrations for several centuries after the apostolic age by the use of Unction and laying on of hands, and by prayer. Full faith was shown in the promises attributed to our Lord: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father";‡ "Nothing shall be impossible unto you":§ and this faith was accorded its promised reward. Indeed, according to Irenæus, who wrote at the end of the second century, "frequently . . . in the brotherhood on account of some necessity—the entire church in that particular locality entreating with much fasting and prayer, the spirit of the dead man has returned, and he has been bestowed in answer to the prayers of the saints."‖ There is much evidence to show that the

* Mark iii. 14.
† Rawlinson, p. 78.
‡ John xiv. 12.
§ Matt. xvii. 20.
‖ *Contra Hæreses*, Bk. II., chap. 31, ii. This passage is quoted at length in Dearmer, *Body and Soul*, pp. 233 *f*.

primary purpose for which Unction was used in the early centuries was the healing of the body, though directly spiritual benefits were also prayed for and expected.* The practice of spiritual healing gradually declined as time went on, and two distinct developments may be seen in West and East respectively.

It is to the ninth century that we can trace the origin of the practice now current throughout the Roman Catholic Communion of regarding Unction chiefly or solely as a preparation for death. This idea only crept in gradually, and it was a common custom down to the twelfth century to give Unction in cases of serious illness, without raising the question as to whether the patient was in danger of death. The causes of the definite change in practice which took

* See, for instance, the delightful prayer contained in the recently discovered Sacramentary of Serapion, the friend of Athanasius, which is worth quoting in full: "We invoke Thee Who hast all authority and power, the Saviour of all men, Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and we pray Thee to send out a healing power of the Only-Begotten from Heaven upon this oil, that it may become to those who are being anointed . . . for a throwing off of every disease and every infirmity, for a prophylactic against every demon, for a separation of every unclean spirit, for an expulsion of every evil spirit, for a driving out of all fever and shivering fit and every infirmity, for good grace and the remission of sins, for a medicine of life and recovery for health and soundness in all their parts of soul, body, spirit, for perfect strengthening. O Master, let every Satanic operation, every demon, every snare of the adversary, every plague, every scourge, every smart, every pain, or stroke, or shaking, or evil shadow, fear Thy Holy Name which we have now invoked and the Name of the Only-Begotten, and let them depart from the inward and the outward parts of these Thy servants, that His name may be glorified Who for us was crucified and rose again, Who took up our sicknesses and our infirmities, even Jesus Christ, and Who is coming to judge quick and dead. Because through Him to Thee are the glory and the strength in the Holy Spirit both now and to all the ages of the ages. Amen." (Quoted by Puller, *The Anointing of the Sick*, pp. 88 *ff.*)

place in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and has continued to the present day, are classified in the *Catholic Encyclopedia* as follows:

"(*a*) The extortionate demands of the clergy on the occasion of administering the Unction, which prevented the poor or even those of moderate means from asking for it, except as a last resource.

"(*b*) The influence of certain popular superstitions, as, for instance, that the person anointed could not in case of recovery use the rights of marriage, eat flesh meat, make a will, walk with bare feet, *etc.*

"(*c*) The teaching of the Scotist School and of other theologians that, as the principal effect of the Sacrament was the final remission of venial sins, it should not be given except to those who could not recover, and were no longer able, or at least likely to fall again into venial sin."*

The Roman Catholic Church, then, has departed from primitive custom in limiting the use of Unction to those in danger of death. The writer in the *Catholic Encyclopedia* understates the true case when he says: "There still linger in the popular mind traces of the erroneous opinion that extreme Unction is to be postponed till a sickness otherwise serious has taken a critical turn for the worse and the danger of death becomes imminent, and priests do not always combat this idea as strongly as they ought to, with the result that possibly in many cases the divinely ordained effect of corporal healing is rendered impossible except by a miracle."†

The development in the Eastern Church has been on different lines, the tendency being to anoint even those who are not ill at all. The writer just referred to proceeds as follows: "If the Easterns have had some justification for their charge against the Westerns of unduly restricting the administration of

* *Art.* "Extreme Unction," vol. v., p. 726.
† P. 726.

this Sacrament, the Orthodox Church is officially responsible for a widespread abuse of the opposite kind which allows the *euchelaion* to be given to persons in perfect health as a complement of penance and a preparation for Holy Communion."* This may be a slight overstatement; but there is no doubt that in certain places a local custom of this kind has grown up. We may add that the prayers used at the administration of Unction in the Eastern Church are more on the primitive model than those contained in the Roman Ritual. The prayer at the actual anointing is as follows: "Holy Father, Physician of souls and of bodies, who didst send Thy Only-Begotten Son as the Healer of every disease and our Deliverer from death, heal also Thy servant *N.* from the bodily infirmity that holds him, and make him live through the grace of Christ by the intercession of . . . all the Saints."†

It appears to many of us who desire to carry out the will of Christ in this matter that both these extreme developments are to be avoided. It is hard to believe that Christ is either less able or less willing to heal today than He was in the days of His incarnate life on earth. If it be asked what is required of Christ as perfect Man to make Him able to heal, the answer is living union with God, which in His earthly life necessarily involved continuous self-sacrifice and ultimate death. That condition on His side, then, is fulfilled. If it be asked what is required of man to receive divine healing, the primary answer is faith—collectively rather than individually. In the large majority of the recorded miracles, faith is either mentioned or implied: but in several cases faith on the part of the person healed is the outcome of the cure, the faith of others being the *condition* of the

* P. 727.

† Quoted in the article referred to above in the *Catholic Encyclopedia.*

cure. Faith, however, is an absolute necessity, and our Lord's healing work is being held up today for precisely the same reason for which it was limited in His life on earth—because of our unbelief. It is commonly asked, Can more be done by divine healing than is done by medicines or by suggestion and psycho-analysis? The answer is that all healing is divine—that drugs and auto-suggestion are instruments given to us by God, which it would be slothful of us to neglect—that above all His instruments God is supreme. Disease, like sin, is contrary to His will: and He is ready to heal even when all the means yet known to science have failed: and this healing is far more than merely physical or merely mental—it is the healing of the whole man.

Those who mistrust the modern practice of spiritual healing on the ground that the state of the body is unimportant, or that disease is given us by God for our good, find but little support in the Gospels, where disease is explicitly said to be the work of Satan.* This teaching, of course, does not conflict with a full acceptance of the great disciplinary value of disease borne patiently, in building up character. On the other hand, those who are enthusiastic in preaching Christ as the Healer must remember that mere physical healing often comes as a result of faith in a witch or in a wooden idol: but that this is only a small part of what we are seeking. Christ is the Healer of our whole being; and, as the Committee appointed by the Lambeth Conference in 1920 points out, "It is not the function of the Church to apply its means of restoration, if no higher end is sought than the recovery of bodily health." The great need would seem to be the linking up of body, mind, and spirit in the religious outlook; and the regular use of the sacraments as the means of appropriating the life of Christ in every need. I be-

* Luke xiii. 16.

lieve that Unction should be used in all cases of serious illness among the faithful with a view to the healing of the body and the remission of sins. If the Church had not misused or neglected this sacrament, it might well have been that such cults as Christian Science would never have arisen.

As for results, it is impossible for us accurately to gauge them. That miracles are happening today analogous to many of those recorded in the Gospels—sometimes by sacramental means, and sometimes by prayer alone—there is no doubt. That results are often partial and gradual is due to precisely the same cause which operated at Nazareth; and it is the duty of Christians to see that they are not themselves contributing to that collective lack of faith which is holding up Christ's work.*

1. The exorcism of the Gadarene demoniac.
2. Compare the story of the raising of Jairus' daughter with those of the widow's son at Nain (Luke vii. 11 *ff.*) and of Lazarus (John xi.).
3. Who were the brethren of our Lord?
4. " The son of Mary."
5. " He could there do no mighty work."
6. " They . . . anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them."

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* The point of view here put forward may be studied further in Claude O'Flaherty, *Health and Religion*. A defence of Roman practice by an Anglican writer may be found in F. G. Belton, *Present-Day Problems in Christian Morals*, chap. vii. It is important in studying this subject to bear in mind the distinction between sacramental means of healing mediated through the Church, and the use of a natural gift (analogous to a gift for music) which certain individuals possess. This latter gift need have no relation to whether its possessor is a Christian or not, though such gifts may most profitably be made use of in conjunction with definitely Christian " suggestion."

## G. Mark vi. 14–viii. 26.

The Twelve are still away on their mission, when the plot of the Pharisees against Jesus becomes really effective. Although we cannot look to Mark for any exact chronology, yet it is a striking fact that, from this point in his Gospel until the final journey to Jerusalem, Jesus seems deliberately to try to avoid the tetrarchy of Herod. We cannot resist the impression that we have arrived at a turning-point in the record of the ministry when we come to the words, "King Herod heard thereof." The evangelist here relates in a long parenthesis the story of the Baptist's death. He does so apparently to bring home the point that, if Herod was so ruthless as to murder John, who had done no miracle, at the whim of a dancing-girl, no quarter need be expected for One Whom he believed to be John "risen from the dead," and Who might well become a grave menace to his authority. So from now onwards Herod's territory is a dangerous place for Jesus. We may notice that even on His final journey through Galilee "He would not that any man should know it."*

As soon as the Twelve return, He takes steps to get away. "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile. For there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat." The next verses give a glimpse of the vast generosity of the Saviour. The people have still pursued Him, even to the desert place. He might well be annoyed, or at least allow them to suffer some pangs of hunger. He had been seeking peace and quiet, and they had again disturbed Him. But "He had compassion on them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd." He taught them many things, and miraculously satisfied their physical

* Mark ix. 30.

hunger. This miracle is the only one which is recorded by all the four evangelists, and it is made by St. John the occasion of the eucharistic discourse. As usual, many attempts have been made to rationalise the story, which need not detain us long. Most of them suggest that the multitudes ate, but were not satisfied. It was either a "love-feast," and the people were spiritually refreshed by food blessed by Christ; or it was a mysterious "sacramental" indication that those who received the bread and fish were among the elect, who were to share in the kingdom of God. An ingenious theory is to the effect that, though the food was not actually multiplied, yet the people were satisfied by the tiny fragments which they received, and therein the miracle consisted. But this, while postulating a definite miracle, leaves unexplained the twelve baskets filled with that which was left over. We need have no difficulty, however, in accepting the story as it stands, and regarding it not only as a work of compassion, but also as a parable of the Eucharist. The bodily needs of the multitudes were satisfied by Christ with a small quantity of food, an adequate meal for one man. In the Eucharist, the meat which perisheth not,* the life of One is sufficient to uphold and nourish both soul and body in every member of the innumerable multitude of the Church, and there is still vital energy to spare. "Bread and fish appear frequently in early Christian frescoes in the catacombs as a symbol of the Eucharist."† The miracle may be explained, like the raising of Lazarus, as the work of God in answer to the prayer of the all-holy One, Who looked up to heaven, using the customary Jewish blessing, "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the world, Who bringest forth bread from the earth." Rawlinson, in commenting on the words "looking up to heaven," notes that "the Western Church retains this attitude on the

* John vi. 27. † Rawlinson, p. 87.

part of the celebrant in the Eucharist: cf. the words of the Roman canon, immediately before the consecration, '*et elevatis oculis ad te*,' *etc.*"*

After the miracle Jesus sent the disciples away in a boat towards Bethsaida. Usually He led the way; now He promised to follow. He Himself retired to a mountain to pray. The significance of all this appears from the parallel story in the fourth Gospel. "Jesus therefore perceiving that they were about to come and take Him by force, to make Him a king, withdrew again into the mountain Himself alone."† The disciples were sent away, lest their heads should be turned by the Master's immense popularity. Jesus Himself went away so as to receive grace and calm from communion with His Father in the face of this appalling temptation. It must have been an almost overwhelming recurrence of that temptation which has caused the downfall of many an attractive personality. "All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me."‡ The disciples failed to reach Bethsaida. A storm arose, and about three o'clock in the morning Jesus walked across the water to them. Their panic probably had some greater cause than the mere sight of Jesus, even in the startling position of walking on the waves. The story is in some ways a difficult and curious one. We read that "He would have passed by them," and only when they cried out does He appear to have noticed them. Jesus had spent the night in prayer, and probably in a ghastly struggle with temptation. Can it be that we have a glimpse of a tremendous mystical experience, which we are never likely fully to understand? Was Jesus still wrapt in prayer, radiating holiness in such a way that even those around could see, and was the walking on the waves in some way akin to the mystics' experiences of levitation? Whereas we *need* no such

* Rawlinson, p. 87. † John vi. 15.
‡ Matt. iv. 9.

theory in order to believe the story, yet it is worth considering whether an explanation on these lines may not be the true one. Too little has been thought and written by orthodox Christians about our Lord as the Pattern of all mystics. This strange story ends with the words, "they were sore amazed in themselves; for they understood not concerning the loaves, but their heart was hardened." St. Matthew says that "they that were in the boat worshipped Him, saying, Of a truth Thou art the Son of God."*

Having failed to cross the lake, they were forced to return to the tetrarchy of Herod. After many more works of healing, Jesus has a long controversy with the Pharisees, from which we see that St. Paul's policy with regard to the Law was in full accord with the spirit of the Master's teaching. It is summed up in the words, "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."† This conversation ends the Galilæan ministry as recorded by St. Mark, and Jesus goes to "the borders of Tyre and Sidon."

Even here "He could not be hid": either His fame had been brought by some traveller, or the disciples in their enthusiasm for their Master's work had let it be known. A Gentile woman came and begged Him to cast a devil out of her daughter. The conversation which ensued deserves careful study. "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs." Christ's ministry was short and intensive: He deliberately devoted Himself primarily to His own people with the intention that they should evangelise the world. This was in full accord with God's dealings with the chosen people as recorded in the Old Testament, and probably explains the events without necessitating the suggestion of Glover‡ that "it was a question with Him whether He should

* Matt. xiv. 33. † 2 Cor. iii. 6.

‡ *The Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire*, p. 127.

spend on a foreigner the 'virtue' that could with difficulty meet the claims of Israel, for He was not conscious of the 'omnipotence' which has been lightly attributed to Him." We have another example in the story before us of the heart of Jesus being touched. The words He used, which seem harsh as we read them, need no "explaining away." To suggest with Glover that the woman first mentioned dogs, and that this has been reflected in Jesus' words, is to miss the point and beauty of the story. Surely it is to be understood as an example of the Master's humour.* He was testing her, but in the kindest possible way. "Ought I to take the children's meat and cast it to the little dogs?"† Her answer showed no annoyance; she realised that His first duty was to the Jews. "Even the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs." And the devil was cast out of her daughter. The case is of interest, as it is an example of "absent treatment," like that of the centurion's servant in St. Matthew and St. Luke. In both cases the patient was a Gentile.

Jesus now returned by a circuitous northern route to the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, where He healed a man who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech. In this cure Jesus used material means; He looked up to heaven and groaned as He uttered the words of power. Clearly the miracle cost Him much. As usual, He urged secrecy, but His instructions were disregarded.

The conventional "In those days" at the beginning of chapter viii. suggests that the narrative is not intended to continue consecutively from chapter vii. Jesus is surrounded by a multitude which has been

* Middleton Murry makes the following unsupported statement: "To those to whom Jesus is God, it must inevitably be almost blasphemous to emphasise so signal a trait in Jesus as His humour" (*op. cit.*, p. 147). This shows how little he appreciates the Christian outlook.

† The Greek word translated "dogs" is a diminutive.

fasting for three days, and again He satisfies them with a few loaves and fishes. It is commonly held that this story is another version of the Feeding of the Five Thousand.* This view receives some support from the strange forgetfulness of the disciples, who again ask: "Whence shall one be able to fill these men with bread here in a desert place?" But this is inconclusive. The evangelist may have confused in his mind the *detail* of the two stories. Mark's reason for relating two such similar incidents may possibly be, as has been suggested, that the former portrays Jesus as giving the Bread of Life to the Jews, and the latter as giving it to the Gentiles: but the evidence for this is slender. Middleton Murry's suggestion that Jesus was gradually losing His popularity, and had only 4,000 followers instead of 5,000, is not probable.†

Jesus and His disciples now go by boat to "the parts of Dalmanutha," the whereabouts of which is unknown. The Pharisees come demanding that Christ should declare Himself as Messiah by giving one of the "signs" which were to be expected before the coming of the kingdom of God. Groaning deeply, He refused any sign to those who were rejecting Him. It appears from the rather cryptic verses which follow that the true sign *for the disciples* was supplied by the bread broken and distributed, which typified the Eucharist; but that they had not the intuition to realise it. That it should have been *possible* for them to appreciate it suggests that our Lord had given a eucharistic discourse such as is recorded by the fourth evangelist. Rawlinson‡ points out that in the early Church a "sign" was needed to strengthen the faith of believers, and that two such "signs" were made use of: (1) the Resur-

* See, for instance, Headlam, *Jesus Christ in History and Faith*, pp. 15 and 73 *f.*

† *Op. cit.*, pp. 149 *f.*

‡ Pp. 257 *f.*

rection, and (2) the Eucharist. Every Sunday when the faithful met together for the breaking of the bread the risen Christ gave them His very life in the Eucharist. In the fourth Gospel, the demand for a "sign" is connected with both these themes.*

"And they come unto Bethsaida," where Christ heals a blind man, as it were, by stages. Again "the Lord condescends to use a popular remedy as a symbol of the healing power which resided in His own humanity."† The story is only in St. Mark, and is of importance in considering the relation of human and divine in the Saviour's Person. This period of our Lord's ministry, which seems to have covered several months, is now at an end. A new stage is about to begin.

1. Estimate the importance of St. John Baptist's life and death.
2. What problems do the feedings of the multitudes present?
3. Can you explain the incident of the walking on the water? (Cf. Matt. xiv. 28-31.)
4. What was Christ's attitude to the Gentiles?
5. "There shall no sign be given."
6. What light is thrown on our Lord's healing ministry by the story of the blind man who saw men "as trees, walking"?

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* John ii. 18-22, vi. 30-33.
† Swete, p. 173.

# PART II

## THE DRAMA OF THE PASSION

### A. Mark viii. 27–ix. 29.

Cæsarea Philippi was a city in Philip's tetrarchy, recently partly rebuilt and named after the Emperor Augustus, in whose honour a temple had been set up close to the old shrine of Pan. This part of the country was largely hellenised, and the population was mainly Gentile. To the suburbs of this city Jesus came with His disciples. The long walk gave them some privacy, and "in the way" they had the conversation which marks a turning-point in our Lord's life. It is a striking thought that the sublime teaching about self-sacrifice which we are about to consider should have been given in this pagan atmosphere. "Who say ye that I am?" Jesus asks. Now for the first time the disciples' faith in Jesus as Messiah is put into words. "Thou art the Christ." He is the Christ indeed. But the Christ was destined to suffer. So prophecy had clearly foretold;* and this idea was highly distasteful to the mind of a Jew. It was our Lord Who first identified the Messiah with the Suffering Servant. So at once after Peter's confession He begins to teach them about His coming passion, and from now onwards this thought is dominant in His mind. The drama of the passion has begun.

Throughout this section we must bear in mind the first readers of St. Mark's Gospel, and the poignant

* Cf. Luke xxiv. 26; Acts viii. 32-35, xxvi. 23.

force of the Master's teaching at a time of almost intolerable persecution for His followers. The Messiah is not a great conqueror, triumphantly ushering in a material kingdom. He is the humble servant of all, "despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."* "The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders, and the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. And He spake the saying openly." Peter is displeased at this solemn utterance. He thinks, no doubt, that our Lord is taking an unduly pessimistic view of future events. "His resistance to the thought of the Passion revealed a deep cleavage between his mind and the mind of God."† Doubtless Peter's words caused our Lord real temptation: hence the warmth of the rebuke. According to St. Matthew, Christ actually used the words, "Thou art a stumbling-block unto Me."‡ Jesus now follows up His teaching before a multitude of people by speaking about the responsibility of discipleship. Not only must the Christ attain to life through suffering and loss: so also must His followers. Whatever persecution or torture a Christian may be called upon to suffer, it is better to sacrifice everything for the sake of Christ and the Good News than to gain all the material good which the world has to offer by denying Him. Here is the very centre of Christ's teaching, which He so gloriously exemplified during the weeks which followed. True life can be attained only through suffering and death. "As dying, and behold, we live."§ "I bear branded on my body the marks of Jesus."‖ A Christian must be prepared to give all, to offer himself as a living sacrifice, to be truly independent of the comforts and luxuries of the world, independent even of the ties of family and friendship,

* Isa. liii. 3.
† Swete, p. 181.
‡ Matt. xvi. 23.
§ 2 Cor. vi. 9.
‖ Gal. vi. 17.

if he is to be a true disciple of the Master. He must imitate, too, the Master's great generosity, rise above all small and petty things, be prepared not to stand on his "rights," to take a far-seeing view of life, patiently to suffer unpopularity and misunderstanding, and not to be distressed though appearances are sometimes against him. And the consolation is that inner peace and calm which only Christ can give. "In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."* This teaching is true for all time, and is in sharp contrast to popular modern opinion about "self-realisation" and "self-culture."

This section ends with a verse the interpretation of which has caused much speculation. "Verily I say unto you, There be some here of them that stand by, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God come with power." It has been thought that this and certain other passages† imply that our Lord expected His own Second Coming to happen within the lifetime of some of those who were present. To adopt this view would have a far-reaching effect upon our attitude towards Christ's whole teaching. To do so would be to give much support to the opinion that it was a temporary ethic given specially for the short period before the End. There is no doubt that in the Apostolic Church, belief in the early coming of the Lord was widely current: but it does not follow from this that Christ Himself had believed in it. The text which we are considering can well be interpreted in another way, which accords better both with the conception of our Lord's Person which we derive from a study of the Gospels, and also with our Lord's parabolic teaching about His Church.‡

* John xvi. 33.

† Matt. x. 23, xxvi. 64; Mark xiii. 30, xiv. 62; John xxi. 23.

‡ I think that this is true, in spite of criticisms such as that of Bousset (*Jesus*, pp. 79 *f.*).

There may be some allusion to the Transfiguration, which was about to follow, when the chosen three beheld the Lord's glory by anticipation. But probably the verse is to be interpreted as referring to Pentecost, and the spread of the Gospel in the power of the Spirit, which was seen throughout the Roman Empire before the death of some of our Lord's hearers.

"After six days" Jesus took with Him the same three who had witnessed the raising of Jairus' daughter, and went "up into a high mountain." This mountain is probably Hermon, which rises to a height of 9,000 feet, overlooking Cæsarea Philippi, rather than Tabor, the traditional site. "And He was transfigured before them." The Transfiguration has too often been thought of as a flash of deity intruding into the incarnate life of Christ.* The truth is rather suggested by Dr. Westcott, in *The Historic Faith*, where he writes: "The Transfiguration is the revelation of the potential spirituality of the earthly life in its highest outward form. . . . Here, as elsewhere, the Son of man gives the measure of the capacity of humanity, and shows that to which He leads those who are united with Him."† Prayer is the highest power possessed by man. St. Luke tells us that it was "as He was praying" that the fashion of His countenance was altered:‡ and this gives us the key to the interpretation of the event. It was the supreme mystical experience of the Saint of saints, and it is closely connected with the coming passion, with which the Master's mind is now filled. According to St. Luke, on the Mount itself "He spake of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem."§ All His life of prayer, meditation, contemplation, and

* For a valuable criticism of such opinions, see Lionel Crawfurd, *The Transfiguration*, ii.

† Quoted by Crawfurd, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

‡ Luke ix. 29. § Luke ix. 31.

vital union with the Father is summed up in this experience. It is to be interpreted in terms of abandonment to sacrifice. We see here the second Adam, the perfect Man, the conqueror of sin and evil, radiating holiness. There is a vision of Moses and Elijah. The Law and the Prophets are fulfilled in the Christ. The old dispensation gives place to the new. The disciples saw the vision, and were terrified, as always, in the presence of the supernatural. And there came again the Echo of the Voice: "This is My beloved Son: hear ye Him." As the Voice at the Baptism ushered in the ministry, so the Voice at the Transfiguration ushers in the journey to Jerusalem to suffering and death.

Some writers make much of the idea that our Lord could have ended His earthly life on the Mount, that it was His right as perfect Man to pass from that radiant glory straight to the bosom of the eternal Father; but that this He refused to do, for it would have left the world still unredeemed. "It was on Calvary, not on Tabor, that he would win His kingdom. Not by beauty of example alone, but by vital power in actual contact with evil, would the love and holiness of God be made manifest, and men would learn how humanity is linked with God in that tremendous conflict."* This idea is a true and valuable one, but it must be thought of in terms of *temptation.* It is too commonly supposed that our Lord was rarely subject to strong temptation after He left the wilderness. Actually throughout the ministry the temptation to compromise must have been constantly pressing upon Him. It was our Lord's right on the Mount of Transfiguration to pass "along a golden path from the limitations of this life to the fuller life beyond"† in the same sense as it

* J. R. Pridie, *The Bearing of the Cross*, published by the Guild of St. Raphael, p. 2.

† J. R. Pridie, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

may be said to have been God's right to leave unredeemed a world which had chosen sin. But the character of Christ is the character of God, and love must inevitably express itself in sacrifice. If God is love, the Incarnation must happen. If Christ is God, the cup of sacrifice must be drunk to the dregs. "It is good for us to be here," St. Peter says, and the temptation to remain must have been great. But the duty of Master and disciples was below in the world.

Although Jesus charged the disciples to tell no man what they had seen, yet it would seem that when He descended from the mountain the fact of His experience was somehow to be perceived: for "the multitude, when they saw Him, were greatly amazed." It is doubtless another example of that indescribable "numinous" impression which He made;* and we shall have occasion to notice this more now that His mind is so filled with the coming passion. A man from the crowd now brings his boy to Jesus. The symptoms described leave little doubt that he suffered from severe epileptic attacks. Often a fit would suddenly come on, and he would fall into the fire or into the water. The father naturally thought of the disease in terms of possession. Our Lord did not correct him, but treated the disease as if it were a case of possession. It is profitless to speculate as to whether our Lord Himself distinguished between possession and disease. Anyhow, it was not His mission to teach science, and we may note that He never did so. "Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I command thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him." An epileptic fit, of course, causes inability to speak or hear; hence the terms in which Christ spoke; and as the fits were periodic, He commanded that they

* Cf. Exod. xxxiv. 29 *f.*, where Moses' face is said to have shone when he came down from Sinai. The people, however, in that case "were afraid to come nigh him."

should finally cease. We notice again the appalling convulsion after the Master had spoken. The verses which end this story are of great importance. The disciples had failed to cure the boy, and they asked the reason. Jesus did *not* reply, "Because I am exercising divine power, which you, being men, are incapable of doing." The reason was that the disciples were lacking in faith* and prayer† and self-denial.‡ Raphael was right in depicting the Transfiguration and the healing of the epileptic boy on the same canvas. The former is the secret of the latter. Christ performed this great work in virtue of that life of sacrifice and prayer which was summed up on the Mount of Hermon.

1. The significance of Peter's confession.
2. Is it possible for a Christian living in the world to carry out our Lord's teaching about self-sacrifice?
3. How do you interpret Mark ix. 1? (Cf. p. 51, footnote †.)
4. Discuss the Transfiguration in terms of Mysticism.
5. Are parallels to be found in the case of saints now living to the frequent fear and amazement which the presence of Christ evinced?
6. What bearing on the Church's work has the disciples' failure to heal the epileptic boy?

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* Matt. xvii. 20. † Mark ix. 29.
‡ According to A.V. and R.V. margin.

## B. Mark ix. 30–x. 52.

The tense and moving drama proceeds. The Master, His mind still full of the redemptive work which lies before Him, is walking *incognito* through Galilee with His disciples. Again He predicts the passion. "But they understood not the saying, and were

afraid to ask Him." The utter loneliness of the Saviour is apparent from this time onwards, as the next verses illustrate. During the walk through Galilee, while the Master was thinking and speaking of the central tragedy in the world's history, which was about to be enacted, the disciples had been discussing who should be the greatest in the kingdom. We have an example of our Lord's loving forbearance in the fact that He dealt very gently with them. He gave them an object-lesson by taking a child into His arms, and turned their thoughts from personal ambition to innocence and childlike simplicity. Tradition has identified this child with Ignatius of Antioch, a reputed disciple of St. John.

There follows a collection of Christ's sayings, every one of which is worth pondering on. We note the magnificent boldness of them. For the Christian there must be no half-measures, no compromise. It is better to be drowned with a great millstone round one's neck than to put temptation in the way of the unsophisticated. Whatever is an occasion of sin, however good and desirable in itself it may be—even though it be a hand or an eye—must ruthlessly be removed. It is better to enter the kingdom even by this drastic method than to be cast into Gehenna. Every Christian must be purified by suffering either in this world or the next. We must, of course, distinguish between Gehenna and Hades. The latter is the place of departed spirits, to which our Lord descended. The former is the place or state of final absence from God. The word "Gehenna" has reference to the Valley of Hinnom outside Jerusalem, where human sacrifices used to take place, and where later the refuse of Jerusalem was burned: hence the thought of perpetually burning fire. It gives in bold metaphor a vivid picture of the unutterably appalling state of the eternally lost. We cannot here go deeply into the perplexing question of eternal punishment,

We may just observe, however, that belief in free-will presupposes the theoretic possibility that someone might with full knowledge deliberately and persistently reject Christ. The natural result of this must be final absence from God, and that is what is meant by Hell. It is at least gravely doubtful whether this can involve annihilation: there seems no support for the opinion either in Scripture or in the teaching of the Church.*

Jesus now arrives in "the borders of Judæa," and crowds again besiege Him. He seems to have been as well known here as in Galilee; probably He had often been here before, as the fourth Gospel leads us to believe.† The Pharisees question Him about divorce. Christian morality with regard to marriage was in sharp contrast to current practice in the Græco-Roman world, and it is natural that St. Mark should embody Christ's teaching on the subject. Our Lord is clear and uncompromising. He goes right behind what Moses tolerated for the hardness of men's hearts, and points to the indissolubility of marriage as a divine law. Much perplexity has been caused by the fact that according to St. Matthew our Lord appears to have allowed divorce and remarriage where fornication had taken place. It is, however, generally admitted even by the critics who hold that St. Matthew's account of our Lord's meaning is the true one, that the actual clauses‡ in St. Matthew's Gospel are interpolations. The Eastern Church, following the first evangelist, allows the "innocent party" to marry again, where there has been adultery.§ The Canon Law of the Roman Catholic and Anglican Communions is clear in allowing separation, but never

* Compare Gore, *Belief in God*, p. 159, footnote 2, with Stone, *Outlines of Christian Dogma*, pp. 271 and 341 *f.*

† Cf. also Luke iv. 44, R.V. margin.

‡ Matt. v. 32, xix. 9.

§ The Eastern Church also allows divorce and remarriage in certain other cases. For particulars see Stone, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

divorce *a vinculo* (*i.e.*, from the bond of marriage).* From the Lord's teaching about the sanctity of marriage,† the evangelist fittingly goes on to relate another incident which illustrates our Lord's love for children. "They brought unto Him little children." The disciples tried to prevent His being bothered: this is one of the rare occasions in the Gospels when we read of our Lord as being "moved with indignation."‡ He took the children up into His arms and blessed them, and told the disciples that "of such" was the kingdom of God. This incident has been quoted since about A.D. 200 in support of the Church's practice of Infant Baptism.

The story of the rich youth, whom Jesus "loved," is the occasion for His teaching about wealth. "Good Master," the young man says, "what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" Our Lord's answer has probably no bearing upon the question of His Person. The words, "None is good, save one, even God," are simply the humble Messiah's sharp refusal of flattery. Christ saw that for this young man the only way into the kingdom was the way of poverty. Just as today the monastic vocation comes to a few, and they can never have true peace till they have answered it, so this rich young man was called to give up all and follow Christ. We read that "he went away sorrowful." But his future history we do not know: perhaps he returned eventually to the service of the Master Who loved him, and Whose heart must have

* Eastern Christians in communion with Rome are, however, allowed to follow their own custom in this matter (see Stone, *op. cit.*, p. 218).

† For a discussion of this whole subject, see Box and Gore, *Divorce in the New Testament*; also an essay by Eric Graham in *Sexual Problems of Today* (ed. Mary Scharlieb). This essay and an important appendix by the same writer are very much the best contributions to an otherwise disappointing book.

‡ Cf. Mark iii. 5

been very sad when he went away. Jesus now speaks of the extreme difficulty of a rich man entering the kingdom: and doubtless by "riches" He does not merely mean money. The more adequately a man is equipped in this world with material possessions, intellect, physical strength or beauty, social position, influence, charm, and the like, the harder it is for him to come into the kingdom in childlike simplicity: and that is the only means of entry. The disciples are bewildered and say: "Then who can be saved?" And Jesus tells them that what is an impossibility on the natural plane is possible by the grace of God on the supernatural plane. St. Peter points out that the disciples at least have made the great sacrifice. He is still perhaps wondering about the nature of their reward. Jesus tells him, speaking doubtless out of His own experience, that the joy and peace of communion with God and the fellowship of those who have left all to serve Him is even in this world the equivalent and far more than the equivalent of the "houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands," which have been left. And this inner peace continues, whatever persecutions are being suffered. But He warns them not to judge men by the standards of the world. "Many that are first shall be last" in the kingdom, "and the last first."

The account of the third prediction of the passion is the most dramatic of them all. "They were in the way, going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus was going before them: and they were amazed; and they that followed were afraid." The Paschal Lamb, the time of whose offering is now approaching, walks ahead of the rest, pondering on the future. The "numinous" effect is terrifying to those who follow. At last He takes the Twelve again and teaches them about the coming passion, this time more explicitly than ever before. It is most moving to see again His utter lone-

liness at a time when human sympathy would have been of such immense comfort to His sorrowful heart. For immediately we read that James and John came to Him asking for the places of honour in the kingdom. The lack of sympathy and understanding on the part of Christ's chosen friends is one of the saddest parts of this amazing story. Again Jesus is infinitely gentle with them. "Can you drink the cup of suffering and be baptised with the baptism of blood by dying a martyr's death?" They answer: "We are able." St. James is recorded to have been martyred by Herod Agrippa I.* There is some doubt about the later history of St. John. One tradition says that he was martyred with his brother. More probably it was he who was condemned to exile in Patmos "for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus."†

Jesus acknowledges their willingness to suffer, but tells them that the places of honour in the kingdom will be given to those who are predestined for them by the Father. The ten are not unnaturally annoyed with James and John; and our Lord presses home that hardest lesson: "Whosoever would be first among you shall be servant of all." And He adds the important words which many would be glad to see eliminated: "For verily the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life *a ransom for many*." The allusion is to the Suffering Servant of the Lord in Isa. liii., and the final phrase suggests the voluntary giving of life as an objective sacrifice necessitated by sin. The fact that we find this objective idea of atonement in this, the earliest record of the life of Christ, is noteworthy.

The chapter ends with the account of the healing of the blind man Bartimæus. Jesus is walking towards Jerusalem, known as a famous prophet, surrounded by a crowd. Bartimæus addresses Him as "Son of David," anticipating the entry into

* Acts xii. 2. † Rev. i. 9.

Jerusalem, of which we read in the next chapter. His faith is the condition of his cure.

1. What are the particular characteristics of children, which Christians must possess, if they are to enter the kingdom of God?
2. Discuss our Lord's teaching about occasions of sin (Mark ix. 43-48) and its bearing on modern conditions.
3. "Everyone shall be salted with fire." What does this mean? Explain the reference to salt.
4. Is it the duty of a Christian citizen to exercise his influence against the extension of facilities for divorce? Or is the plea justified that it is not possible or desirable to force a Christian ethic on non-Christian people?
5. Compare Mark x. 17-22 with Mark v. 18 and 19. What is to be learnt from this comparison?
6. Christ's teaching about riches, and its bearing on present-day problems connected with capital and labour.

## C. Mark xi. 1.–xii. 17

When they are within about three miles of Jerusalem, Jesus makes careful preparations for His solemn entry. He is about to enter as Messiah—not as a warrior-prince, rather as the humble, peace-loving King of Israel, in fulfilment of the prophecy of Zechariah: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy king cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt, the foal of an ass."* A comparison of St. Mark's account of the entry into Jerusalem with that of St. Matthew makes it probable that St. Mark is relating the events just as they happened. St. Matthew characteristically fills in the details of the

* Zech. ix. 9.

story to fit the prophecy. Jesus sends two disciples to a neighbouring village, probably Bethphage, to fetch a colt "whereon no man ever yet sat." The choice of an animal which had never been ridden was fitting for the solemn purpose which He had in view,* and was a clear indication of His unique claims. Swete insists† that the story of the fetching of the colt must be taken into consideration in studying the problem of our Lord's voluntary restraint of divine powers during His incarnate life. Actually no great problem seems to be raised by the story in this connexion. If Jesus had been in Jerusalem before, as is almost certain, He may well have had a friend who would gladly allow his colt to be borrowed when he learnt that the Master had need of it. If any supernatural prevision was involved, as it may have been, it is not necessary to suppose that it differed essentially from the inspiration of the prophets.‡ We have indeed most of us ourselves had some experience of remarkable intuitions and premonitions. Jesus is hailed in the words of Psalm cxviii.: "Blessed in the name of the Lord be He that cometh." These words might be used to welcome any pilgrim who came to Jerusalem for the Feast: but the next verses suggest that some of the crowd realised the true mission of this prophet from Galilee: "Blessed is the kingdom that cometh, the kingdom of our father David: Hosanna in the highest." Today this echo of Palm Sunday is heard at Mass, hailing the sacramental presence of this same Jesus.

Jesus slept with His friends at Bethany, and on His way back to Jerusalem in the morning, He was hungry. There follows the strange story of the barren fig-tree and its cursing. This, like the incident of the Gadarene swine, has caused much

* Cf. Num. xix. 2; Deut. xxi. 3.
† P. 248. ‡ Cf. Matt. xvii. 27; John i. 48.

perplexity. In almost every case of a recorded miracle, it is clear that love was the motive;* and here it is not quite easy to see how this was so. The tree seems to have been planted in some warm and sheltered place, for it already had leaves before Passover time. Our Lord hoped for even further results from this natural "hot-house," and was disappointed to find no fruit, not even the half-ripe figs which the peasants in Palestine were accustomed to eat with bread. The curse was uttered, and the next morning, as they came along the same way, they found that the fig-tree had withered: and our Lord made this the occasion for teaching about the incalculable results of prayer when accompanied by complete faith. We cannot escape from the fact that this whole story is difficult. If the event happened exactly as narrated, this does seem to be a curious exception to our Lord's usual methods. It is commonly explained as an acted parable, symbolising judgement upon Jerusalem; and certainly the spectacle of the tree actually withered would bring home this lesson with great effectiveness. Even so, the case would be unique, and does not seem to fit in with what we know of the character of our Lord.† Nor does the teaching about prayer fit in very naturally in this context. One cannot help wondering whether by the time St. Mark wrote, some confusion had arisen between a parable which Jesus told, and a non-miraculous incident connected with a fig-tree between Bethany and Jerusalem, which withered. Part of the basis of the story may well be the parable in Luke xiii. 6-9. At least, our minds should be open to the possibility of some such explanation.

The day after our Lord's solemn entry into

* I think the only other possible exception is Matt. xvii. 24-27, a story peculiar to the first Gospel.

† But for a possible explanation see Additional Note on p. 87.

Jerusalem, He began by a striking display of His supreme authority as Messiah. No longer is there any need for reserve or concealment. He has made a messianic entry. He knows that the time for the final sacrifice is near. St. John puts the cleansing of the Temple at the beginning of the ministry, probably for symbolic reasons. It is more likely actually to have taken place during these last few days, as St. Mark says.* Within the precincts of the Temple was a recognised market. There one could purchase victims for sacrifice, wine, salt, and oil, and such-like Temple requirements. Here also were the moneychangers, who made large profits by charging a high rate of exchange to pilgrims from the country, who had to pay in Jewish money their annual half-shekel for the support of the Temple. This market took place in the Court of the Gentiles, the only part of the Temple where Gentiles were allowed to pray. "So far as in them lay, the authorities had defeated the fulfilment of prophecy; for who could pray in a place which was at once a cattle-market and an exchange, where the lowing of oxen mingled with the clinking of silver and the chaffering and haggling of the dealers and those who came to purchase?"† The Temple of God was being profaned; advantage was being taken of the pilgrims; the Gentiles were being excluded from their lawful place of prayer. Against all this the Messiah vigorously protested. He cast out both buyers and sellers, and upset the tables and chairs. He even forbade the use of the sacred precincts as a short cut from one place to another, a realistic touch which only Mark gives; it may well have been a recollection of St. Peter's. No doubt the Master's action collected a crowd, and He took the oppor-

* Unless, as is possible, the two evangelists refer to different incidents.

† Swete, p. 257.

tunity of teaching the lesson, basing it on holy Scripture. "Is it not written, My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations? but ye have made it a brigands' den."

Probably on the day following, our Lord was walking in the courts of the Temple, as was customary, when a deputation came to Him. It consisted of "chief priests, scribes, and elders," representing the three divisions of the Sanhedrin. It is likely that this had been carefully arranged the day before as a result of our Lord's action in cleansing the Temple. The question asked was a reasonable one, and the questioners those who were in responsible charge of the Temple. Jesus had behaved in such a way as apparently to claim jurisdiction superior to theirs. They ask Him to state His authority. The *occasion* is the cleansing of the Temple: but "these things" no doubt included reference to the whole ministry, during which Jesus had done many things in apparent conflict with authority. Jesus gives His answer implicitly rather than explicitly. If His questioners acknowledge John's baptism as "from heaven," why do they reject Him Whom John had proclaimed as a prophet far greater than himself? Indeed, if John preached that the kingdom was at hand, Who could He be, Who followed after him, but the Messiah Himself? Thus our Lord put forward implicitly His messianic claim, and His questioners for the time being were silenced.

Jesus followed this up by a parable, the meaning of which is for once translucently clear. He sets forth in bold relief before His enemies the exact nature of the crime which they were committing. They had rejected the prophets. Now they were about to kill the beloved Son and Heir Himself. It is probable that here, as elsewhere, our Lord anticipated the Fall of Jerusalem. At the end of the parable Jesus adds two verses from the 118th Psalm, which would be

fresh in His mind after the entry, when He was hailed with Hosannas. In the Psalm the rejected stone was the people of Israel. Here Jesus applies it to Himself as the representative of His people. The apostles were impressed by this application of prophecy. After Pentecost St. Peter reminded Annas and Caiaphas and the rest of what they had done, with the poignant words, " He is the stone which was set at nought of you the builders, which was made the head of the corner."* The idea of Christ as the Cornerstone has been a favourite one in the Church, emphasising as it does the strength and unity of baptised Christians in the Body of Christ. It is noteworthy that Jesus was still popular with the multitude. The members of the Sanhedrin were afraid " to lay hold on Him " for this reason, though they fully understood the meaning of the parable.

We read next that " certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians " came in the hope of entrapping Him. They begin by flattering Him, and saying that of course He will answer them in accordance with truth and without fear of the consequences. They then put to Him a highly controversial question. The tax which the Jews had to pay to the Roman Emperor was a sign of their subjection, and bitterly resented. When it was first levied it caused a revolt, and feeling still ran high on the subject. If only Jesus would commit Himself to the unlawfulness of the tribute, He would at once be charged with treason. If, on the other hand, He said that tribute was lawful, His popularity with the people would cease. Their subtilty was, of course, quite obvious to Jesus, and again He refused a direct answer. He said, " Fetch me a denarius "; and we can imagine the eager suspense while the coin was being fetched. On it was the " image and superscription " of Cæsar. Our Lord's judgement in the matter was in effect a recog-

* Acts iv. 11. Cf. 1 Pet. ii. 4 and 7.

nition that it was right to pay the tribute in the circumstances. It was possible for the people to do this, and still to observe their duty towards God. About the desirability of Jewish subjection to Rome, Christ expresses no opinion. "And they marvelled greatly at Him," not only because of the wisdom of His reply, but also doubtless because of His calm in face of endless annoyances, and at a time when everyone knew that He was in danger of His life.

1. The significance of the entry into Jerusalem.
2. Was the inspiration of our Lord analogous to the inspiration of the prophets?
3. The problems raised by the story of the withered fig-tree.
4. The cleansing of the Temple.
5. Christ as the Corner-stone.
6. The position of Jews in the Roman Empire at the time of Christ.

## D. Mark xii. 18–xiii. 37.

The greater part of chapter xii. is taken up with a series of tiresome questions which were put to Jesus. In face of great provocation, He is calm and unruffled, always master of the situation. Some Sadducees now come to Him, members of the aristocratic, conservative party among the Jews, who did not accept the comparatively modern* teaching about the resurrection of the dead. Under the guise of seeking information, they propound an imaginary case which appears to make the doctrine of resurrection an impossible absurdity. Jesus responds with the damning indictment that they who belong to the priestly aristocracy are ignorant both of holy Scripture and of the mind of God. Was Almighty God

* Belief in the resurrection of the dead arose among the Jews only after the Exile.

unable to raise the dead? Or could He only raise them to a life with conditions exactly resembling those in this present life? In the resurrection man will live on the spiritual plane like the angels (in which also the Sadducees disbelieved). God told Moses that He was the God of patriarchs who had died long before. He is the God of the living, not of the dead; so the patriarchs must still be truly alive, though they have left this world. Though this might appear to us to be an argument for the immortality of the soul rather than strictly for the resurrection of the body, to the mind of a Jew it would prove the latter by implication. Our Lord's reference to the Pentateuch as "the book of Moses" has, I think, no bearing upon the question of the Mosaic authorship, nor does it indicate in any way whether in His earthly life He actually accepted the current opinion on the subject.

The next questioner is a scribe, who, according to St. Matthew, came "tempting Him";* and despite the friendly issue in St. Mark's account, it is quite likely that his motive in questioning Jesus was not a friendly one, and that his whole attitude was changed by a short conversation with the Saviour. Jesus emphasised, as ever, the spirit of the Law rather than the letter; and He rejoiced to find at least one of the scribes who appreciated this point, and recognised morality as of greater importance than ritual. Out of the generosity of His heart, Christ says to this representative of the hostile party: "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." We can imagine the Master hoping and praying that riches of intellect would not prevent this man from entering the kingdom "as a little child," as wealth was deterring the rich young ruler. We read that no man after that dared to question Him. The splendour of His majestic calm awed them into silence. His popularity

* Matt. xxii. 35.

with the people is still maintained, and He now returns to His public teaching. Assuming the then universally accepted Davidic authorship of the 110th Psalm, He teaches them that the Messiah is not merely David's son, but also David's Lord. To the first readers of the Gospel this would be of interest, because "Lord" was the usual title used of Jesus, and this incident would show that the Master had applied it to Himself. This Psalm is constantly referred to by apostolic and sub-apostolic writers.

In the next verses St. Mark gives a short summary of the long discourse recorded by St. Matthew against the Pharisees. It is interesting to compare Christ's stern denunciations of self-righteousness and greed and lack of consideration for the poor and oppressed, with His gentle dealings with those poor women who had been led into sin by the lust of man. The thought of scribes who "devour widows' houses" leads on to the beautiful story of the pauper widow. Jesus was sitting down, feeling tired and sad, watching the rich men casting their money into the treasury. At last He saw a sight which gladdened His heart, and He called the disciples to Him to teach them the lesson, beginning with the emphatic words, "Verily I say unto you." Here was a soul indeed very near to the kingdom of God.

Chapter xiii. is of unique interest, and really requires far fuller treatment than is possible here. Jesus knows that the time of His final sacrifice is very near. His mind is filled with ultimate things, and every word He utters is full of awful significance. As He leaves the Temple, He is meditating on the appalling doom which He foresees is to befall Jerusalem. Every stone of the Temple is to be thrown down. The four disciples who first left their nets to follow Him come and ask Him when this destruction is to take place, and what are to be the signs of it. No doubt we have here a vivid memory of St. Peter's.

Every detail of place and posture is remembered. They are on the Mount of Olives with the Temple in sight, and Jesus is sitting down. As He answers He speaks under special inspiration, and makes use of much symbolism which would be familiar to His hearers. From thoughts of the coming destruction of Jerusalem, which actually occurred a few years after St. Mark's Gospel had been written, His mind passes rapidly forward to the final cataclysm, which is to end the age. We must remember that in the early Church the End was expected very soon, and this can hardly have failed to colour St. Mark's record of the Master's words. Probably this partly accounts for the fact that prophecies about the Fall of Jerusalem and about the End of the Age are closely interwoven in this chapter, so that they are hard to disentangle. We must distinguish further between our Lord's ordinary daily teaching and this long inspired prophecy uttered at a most solemn moment. The events which are to be the prelude to the End stand out before His mind in vivid colours. They express themselves naturally in terms of the apocalyptic in which His mind is steeped. He is deeply concerned to bring home to the disciples the tremendous need of watching, for they know not the day nor the hour. The Christian must live as if the great Judge were coming today. Actually much has to happen before the End, including the preaching of the Gospel to all nations, but for the reasons stated above we must not be surprised to have a general impression from reading this chapter of the imminence of the judgement.

It is held by a number of critics that the chapter is composite, containing some genuine sayings of Christ, but also embodying a small Jewish or Jewish-Christian apocalypse. The word "apocalypse" means "unveiling of the future"; and apocalyptic was a favourite form of prophetic utterance. A

magnificent example is the Revelation of St. John. The " little apocalypse " said to be embodied in this chapter is held to consist of verses 7-8, 14-20, 24-27, and perhaps 30-31. The reader will do well to read these verses as a consecutive whole, and to let his mind be open to the possibility that this theory is correct. In favour of it, there are the facts that the language is highly suggestive of current apocalyptic, and that nowhere else does our Lord's teaching approach the detailed predictions of the signs of the End given in this passage. On the other hand, the theory is a speculation without any documentary evidence; and it is quite to be expected that our Lord's teaching would assume a very special character during the last few days before His crucifixion. It is interesting to follow out how the prophecies contained in this chapter have been fulfilled. Impostors arose, pretending to be prophets or even the Messiah Himself,* though there is no certain evidence of the latter claim until the time of Barcochba, who led an insurrection in A.D. 132. There was a famine under Claudius† about 46; there were earthquakes at Laodicea in 61 and at Pompeii in 62; there were riots at Jerusalem under Agrippa II., and the final struggle began in 66. St. Paul was brought before " governors and kings," and five times he was scourged.‡ Christians were " hated of all men " for the sake of Christ. The faithful who were suffering such appalling persecution at the time when this Gospel appeared could be comforted with the thought that the Master had anticipated all. In verses 14 *ff.* the immediate indications of the End are described. Antichrist is to appear, and the Temple to be defiled. Eventually the Son of man is to come with great power and glory, and gather together His elect. Certain conservative writers suppose that up to verse 23 our Lord is speak-

* Acts viii. 9, *etc.* † Acts xi. 28.
‡ 2 Cor. xi. 24.

ing of the Fall of Jerusalem, and that He then goes on to speak of the End of the Age. "*After* that tribulation" is held not necessarily to mean "*soon after*." "The Lord merely foretells that His personal coming will follow the capture of Jerusalem, and cannot precede and prevent it, as many might be tempted to expect."* "The sun shall be darkened," *etc.*, is held to predict in symbolic words "dynastic and social revolutions greater and wider than any which swept over Babylon and Egypt," although it is admitted that they "do not exclude, perhaps they even suggest, a collapse of the present order of Nature"* immediately before the End.

I have tried to show above that in my view no such explanations are necessary. Even the words, "This generation shall not pass away until all these things be accomplished," are explicable on the lines which I have suggested without thinking that our Lord actually expected the cataclysm within the lifetime of His hearers. Indeed, He goes on expressly to disclaim knowledge of the day or the hour of the End. This verse (32) is of great interest in our consideration of our Lord's Person. In one breath Christ speaks of the limitation of His knowledge in the incarnate state, and also safeguards the truth of His divinity by placing Himself higher than the angels, next only to the Father.† Much has been written about this verse. There seems no reason to suppose that "Jesus' 'ignorance' of that hour was not real ignorance, but only a 'withheld knowledge,'" that "He knew not as the Father's messenger to men, 'with communicable knowledge.'"‡ Many today will agree with the protest of Theodoret against teaching on this subject current in his day: "If He knew the day, and, wishing to conceal it, said He was

* Swete, p. 311. † Cf. Heb. i. 4 *ff.*

‡ F. Woodlock, S.J., *Modernism and the Christian Church*, p. 39.

ignorant, see what blasphemy is the result of this conclusion. Truth tells a lie."* The chapter ends with the Lord's solemn, oft-repeated adjuration to watch.

1. Of what importance to Christians is the doctrine of Angels?
2. What is meant by the Resurrection of the Body?
3. With what sins did our Lord deal most severely?
4. What is Apocalyptic?
5. How were the prophecies in Mark xiii. fulfilled?
6. Is it possible to distinguish in Mark xiii. between prophecies relating to the Fall of Jerusalem and those relating to the End of the Age? (Cf. Matt. xxiv. and Luke xxi.)

* Quoted by Gore, *Dissertations* (ed. 1907), p. 131.

## E. Mark xiv.

The members of the Sanhedrin were still afraid of Christ's popularity with the people; and this presented a special problem when Jerusalem was full of pilgrims. They must devise some plan by which to take Him "by subtilty" before the actual feast began. Jesus is still staying with His friends at Bethany. St. Mark characteristically puts side by side in striking contrast the stories of the anointing of our Lord's head, and of the traitor's treachery. According to St. John, the woman who brought the spikenard was Mary, whose brother Lazarus Jesus had raised from the dead; and this gives the story special point. She of all people would have reason for this act of love, and from her we learn the lesson of quiet devotion and worship for their own sake—a lesson much needed at a time when social service is often regarded as an alternative to prayer and meditation and eucharistic worship. The lavish nature of the gift is shown by

the mention of above 300 pence as its probable value—a labourer's wages for nearly a year,* more than enough to feed 5,000 men with bread.† The acceptance of the anointing by the humble Saviour, Who lived and died in poverty, is one of many small indications of His deity, and it is to have a lesson for all time.‡ Fragrant and costly incense was being offered to Him, Who as priest and victim was about to make the "full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world." Meanwhile Judas was accepting a bribe from the chief priests to betray the place where the Master would be found that night, so that He could be quietly apprehended. To make certain of doing this, and in order not to excite suspicion, Judas returned and was with the others at the Last Supper, the preparations for which are next narrated.

According to St. Mark, this meal was the actual eating of the Passover:§ according to St. John, the day of the Crucifixion itself was the Passover day.‖ Recent scholarship, which follows the Johannine rather than the Marcan version, has explained this contradiction in a convincing way. "The Institution [of the Eucharist] took place at the end of a meal, which was not the Passover, since four cups were used for that feast. What was this meal? Pious Jews met on Friday afternoons at the house of a friend for a religious and social meal. They formed a *Chābūrah*, or society (*Chābārā* = comrade). At dusk the meal was interrupted, for the Sabbath then began. The president took a cup of wine and pronounced a benediction. . . . In early post-Christian times the meal and ceremony were transferred to the synagogue and known as *Kiddūsh*. This meal and ceremony took place also on the eve of great festivals. Christ

* Matt. xx. 2. † Mark vi. 37.
‡ Mark xiv. 9. § Mark xiv. 12.
‖ John xiii. 1 and 29, xviii. 28, xix. 14.

and the Apostles formed a *Chābūrah*. Their Passover-Eve meeting would consist of (1) a Grace; (2) a social meal; (3) conversation on religious subjects (a developed form is preserved in John xiv.-xvi.); (4) 'the Sanctification,' which would take the form of a combined commemoration of the Sabbath and redemption from Egyptian bondage. The meal was transferred to Thursday because the Day of Preparation, when the lambs were sacrificed, was regarded as an introduction to the feast. The Passover flavour of this ceremony would leave the impression that it was a Passover meal."* This theory explains among other things the fact that the Eucharist was celebrated weekly—"the feast which it commemorated being the weekly *Kiddūsh*."*

Our Lord had made the necessary arrangements for the meal. Two disciples were sent ahead to see that all was in order, and to make the final preparations. A careful reading of verses 12 to 16 seems to show that no miracle is implied with regard to these preparations. Waterpots were normally carried by women, and a man carrying a pitcher of water would be an unusual and conspicuous sight. Our Lord had probably arranged this sign with the owner of the upper room. In considering the Last Supper and the institution of the Eucharist, it is important to bear in mind the sacrificial atmosphere which surrounded the whole proceedings, owing to their association with the Passover, which in its origin was "a sacrifice in which deliverance was accomplished by means of blood, the symbol of life."† In these surroundings our Lord uttered the words, "This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured

* From Dr. Lowther Clarke's review of Dr. Oesterley's book, *The Jewish Background of the Christian Liturgy* in *Theology* for June, 1927.

† Darwell Stone, *A History of the Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist*, vol. i., p. 9.

out* for many." At once the thoughts of His hearers would be directed to the covenant made between God and His chosen people, which was ratified by a sacrificial meal.† The word translated "poured out" "suggests the pouring out of the blood of the slain victim at the base of the altar in Jewish sacrifices, rather than the shedding of the blood in death."‡ Even bread and wine had a sacrificial significance § as being the constituents of the meal offering among the Jews. Our Lord fulfilled the whole sacrificial system, both animal and vegetable, by making bread and wine become His own Body and Blood.

* The word translated "shed" in Mark is more correctly rendered "poured out" in the parallel passage in Luke.

† Exod. xxiv. 1-11. The reader should not fail to look up this reference.

‡ Stone, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

§ Compare a very interesting passage by F. D. V. Narborough in *Essays on the Trinity and the Incarnation* (Longmans, 1928), pp. 38 *f.* With regard to the fact that our Lord quoted the 110th Psalm as referring to the Messiah, the writer says: "It follows that Jesus must have regarded as addressed to the Messiah the words:

> 'The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent,
> Thou art a priest for ever
> After the order of Melchizedek.'

Have we any indication that this priesthood of the Messiah held any place in His messianic consciousness? Few and mysterious indeed are the statements made about Melchizedek, but outstanding among them is the record that he 'brought forth bread and wine.' At His last supper our Lord took bread and wine, and connected them with His coming death. The essence of Jewish priesthood was, as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews remarks, the having of somewhat to offer in sacrifice (Heb. viii. 3). In Isa. liii. 10 the Servant's life is said to be made an offering by the Servant's death. In that offering lay, in our Lord's mind, the priesthood of the Messiah. Like Melchizedek He took bread and wine, and it was the influence of the Melchizedek symbols which led Him to describe the offering of His life as an offering of Body and Blood."

As they are reclining at the meal, Jesus shows that He has penetrated into the mind of the traitor, and He utters some of the most awful words in the whole of the Bible: " Good were it for that man if he had not been born." These words, together with that final act of trust and love when the Master gave to the traitor His own Body and Blood, must be taken as a last appeal to his better nature. They do not seem definitely to exclude the idea that Judas' ultimate penitence* was genuine, an idea with which many writers have played.† It is true that he committed suicide, but he might have done even worse than this. " He might have endured to live on and brave out his sin, and curried favour with the priests, and persuaded himself he had done well for Church and State. He might have kept his pieces of silver and added to them and grown rich and fat and comfortable, and damned his soul ten times deeper."‡

The problem raised by the difficult conception of our Lord giving His own Body and Blood in sacramental form before He had risen and ascended is one which has perplexed many. As a solution it has been suggested that at the Last Supper the apostles " did not feed upon Christ, as we do now, in reality, but only in figure; their first real and sacramental Communion in the body and blood of Christ can only have been made after that body and blood had been glorified and freed from spatial limitations by the resurrection."§ According to this view, our Lord meant, " This will be My body, when you do it in remembrance of Me." I venture to suggest that

* Matt. xxvii. 3.

† See, for instance, Robert Buchanan's poem in *The Oxford Book of Victorian Verse*, p. 671.

‡ J. Paterson Smyth, *op. cit.*, p. 381.

§ N. P. Williams in *Essays Catholic and Critical*, p. 423. Cf. Goudge, *1 Corinthians*, p. 105.

the story is more probably to be interpreted in terms of mystical experience. Our Lord shared with the disciples the consecrated gifts which He gave to all.* He Who had given Himself over to sacrifice and was about to be offered had another mystical experience akin to the Transfiguration, in which in some measure the apostles shared. Both Master and disciples were lifted up to heaven and had a foretaste of that union with God which is the goal of existence.

After supper, Judas goes out into the night to do his ghastly work, and the rest go to the Mount of Olives. Jesus knows that His desolation is to become more and more complete. He foretells the denial of the Prince of the Apostles, the Rock. And they come to Gethsemane; Jesus takes with Him the chosen three, still hoping for some measure of human sympathy. A new stage in His agony is beginning: as the passion grows near, He is filled with awe and distress—a sorrow which is almost more than even perfect Man can bear. The three are to support Him in His agony by fervent prayer. With God all things are possible. Can it be that redemption can be effected by some means other than those which He sees so vividly before Him? "Father, all things are possible unto Thee; remove this cup from Me," He prays. Yet His human will, which shrinks from the cross, is ever submissive to the divine will—"howbeit, not what I will, but what Thou wilt." Meanwhile the apostles have failed Him. "Simon," the Master says (no longer does he deserve the name which signifies a rock), "couldest thou not watch one hour?" Three times in all He prayed, and at

* Rawlinson thinks that Luke xxii. 17-18 excludes the idea that Christ Himself received the chalice: but both Mark xiv. 25 and Matt. xxvi. 29 seem to imply that He did. Consequently I do not think that great stress can be laid on the slightly different wording of the parallel passage in Luke.

last He conquered, and in the strength of that conquest He went forth with perfect calm to all that lay before Him. Still the disciples slept.

Father Ronald Knox has written a beautiful passage about Gethsemane, which deserves quoting: "Jesus in His agony saw, and foresaw, all the sins and all the ingratitude of the whole world. He saw the heart of Judas black with treachery, He saw His chosen disciples already sleeping at the hour of crisis, and ready to desert Him at the hour of peril; He saw the fanatical hatred of the Jews, the cynical hardness of Pilate, the frivolous injustice of Herod: He saw down the long avenues of the unborn future, wars and crimes and foul passions, hypocrisy, oppression and wrong: He saw the schisms that would tear the body of His Church, the heresies that would lead wanderers away from His fold: He saw Tyburn, and Louvain, and the streets of London at midnight —all mirrored in the prophetic Chalice of Gethsemane. He saw it, and all His desires, thwarted by human wills, for human salvation and perfection, turned to prayer in the crucible of His burning Heart, and went up in agony to God."* We must be careful not to be carried away by rhetoric. With true intuition our Lord looked forward indeed not only to His passion, but also to the trials and perils of the world and His Church. But we must not emasculate the story by failing to appreciate that which brings so clearly before us the amazing condescension of the divine Word—the struggle of the Man Jesus against the "will to live," the natural human instinct of self-preservation. This fact alone is, of course, far from explaining this appalling experience. "There must have been . . . in some way beyond our ken, some awful burden laid by the Sin-bearing for human souls on the sinless soul of

* *Bread or Stone*, pp. 33 *f.*

the Christ, some deadly conflict with the powers of darkness."*

There follows the vivid story of Christ's arrest. Jesus, as we saw, emerged from His agony of prayer in perfect calm. According to St. Matthew, He responded to the traitor's kiss with the gentle words, "Friend, wherefore art thou come?"† He protested quietly, not against the fact of His arrest, but against the manner of it: and when St. Peter‡ cut off the ear of the high priest's servant, Jesus rebuked him,§ and (St. Luke adds) He healed the wound.‖ Jesus' desolation proceeds, and those who had forsaken all to follow Him now forsake Him and flee. All must have suffered agonies of shame, and Peter at least cannot bring himself to go far away. He must see what happens: and during the trial before the Sanhedrin, he is in the courtyard below with the servants, and there occurs his threefold denial. Meanwhile Caiaphas with the three orders of the Sanhedrin, chief priests and elders and scribes, tries to establish a charge against Jesus. At first he is unable to do so, since two witnesses cannot be found who agree in charging Him with a capital offence.¶ The great hope is that Jesus may categorically claim messiahship. "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" . . . We can imagine a tense moment of expectancy. Will He still be silent, or what is to be the answer? "I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." Solemnly our Lord warns His judges that ultimately He Himself will be their Judge, and that they and their children will be witnesses of the reign of Christ after the Ascension, culminating in His final coming.

* J. Paterson Smyth, *op. cit.*, p. 374.
† Matt. xxvi. 50 (A.V.).
‡ John xviii. 10.
§ Matt. xxvi. 52.
‖ Luke xxii. 51.
¶ Cf. Deut. xix. 5.

Their only thought, however, is that their aim has been secured. He is condemned out of His own mouth and is found worthy of death.

1. Who was the woman who anointed Jesus, and what is the significance of the story?
2. The meaning of the Betrayal.
3. The first Eucharist.
4. What do we learn which is of value for our own prayers from the story of Gethsemane?
5. The trial of Jesus.
6. The psychology of St. Peter, as illustrated by the denial and subsequent penitence.

## F. Mark xv. and xvi.

Jesus is next brought before Pontius Pilate, the Roman procurator of Judæa, who was in Jerusalem during the feast to maintain discipline. It is of great interest to see the effect of the calm dignity of this prisoner even upon Pilate, who was described by Agrippa I. as "inflexible, merciless, and obstinate."* He "marvelled" at Jesus' silence, and clearly had serious qualms about condemning Him. Everyone knows how quickly the sympathies of a crowd can be influenced, and now we see the people turning against Jesus. "With the fickle cruelty of an irresponsible multitude they clamoured for the death of One Whose release they had a few minutes before been disposed to demand (v. 8)."† We need not, of course, suppose that the crowd consisted originally of Christ's supporters exclusively. There were

* So Philo, *Leg. ad Caium*, 38; quoted by Rawlinson, p. 226.

† Swete, p. 372.

doubtless partisans of both Jesus and Barabbas, and the latter won the day. At last, "to content the multitude," the weak governor handed Jesus over to be scourged and crucified. The soldiers strip Him and dress Him as a mock-emperor. On His head is a painful caricature of the Emperor's laurel wreath: probably a scarlet cloak belonging to one of the soldiers served the purpose of royal purple. And they paid mock homage to Him, crying: "*Ave, rex Judæorum!*" a parody of "*Ave, Cæsar Imperator!*"* The custom was for the prisoner to carry his own cross, and doubtless Jesus started to do this, but when He proved physically unable to stand the strain, they caused a passer-by to do so for Him.

At the place called Golgotha Jesus was offered "wine mingled with myrrh," but He refused to dull His senses by drinking it. All the traditions agree that it was as One Who claimed to be King of the Jews that Jesus was crucified. After three hours began the appalling period of darkness. A terrifying gloom came down with altogether exceptional intensity over the whole surrounding country, as sin in all its unutterable horror swept like a hurricane over the spotless mind of the Crucified. At last He uttered the awful cry, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" The sense of continuous communion with God had been through all hardships the greatest consolation to our Lord. Even when He was betrayed, denied, and forsaken by those whom He had chosen to be His friends, yet He was not alone, because the Father was with Him.† But it was necessary for the redeemer to touch the very depths of desolation: and so now even that joy is removed. He has the actual experience of dereliction. He feels that His Father, too, has forsaken Him. We have watched the stages by which gradually the joys of life were removed from our Lord. This is the final and

* Rawlinson, p. 231. † John xvi. 32.

most ghastly stage. He Who knew no sin suffered the worst fate which could befall sinful man; summed up in those hours on Calvary was an eternity of torment. Jesus knew what that "absence from God" was like, which must be the organic result of wilful persistence in sin. This is the only word from the cross which St. Mark records, and it is of all the seven the most important. The reference, of course, is to the 22nd Psalm, and we need not doubt that our Lord made use of the familiar psalter during those hours of agony. But to suppose that this word was merely a part of the Psalm which someone overheard the Saviour reciting, and that it did not reflect the actual state of His mind, is disastrously to misinterpret the meaning of this vast sacrifice. "Him Who knew no sin He made to be sin on our behalf."* The Lord "laid on Him the iniquity of us all."† For three hours the intensity of the struggle continued, and at last the Christ emerged triumphant. As after His agony of prayer in Gethsemane He calmly went forth to betrayal and arrest, so now He is able to commend His spirit into the hands of the Father, the sense of Whose presence had been removed, to die as our redeemer and our perfect pattern. The majesty of the dying Christ impelled even the Roman centurion to speak of Him as "a son of God."‡ The sacrifice had been offered and accepted. The way to God was opened up for sinful men.

There is no Christian doctrine which is more of a stumbling-block to the "wise and prudent" than that of the objective Atonement. The Cross has always been "unto Jews a stumbling-block, and unto Gentiles foolishness."§ Yet there is no truth more firmly rooted in Christian experience. That the Atonement is a mystery and difficult to reduce to exact terms is certainly true: the same applies

* 2 Cor. v. 21. † Isa. liii. 6 (cf. A.V. margin).
‡ R.V. margin. § 1 Cor. i. 23.

to the doctrine of the Trinity. Yet we can grope towards some conception of the meaning of the Atonement. God gave man free-will. If He had not done so, there could be no such thing as " goodness " in the sense in which we understand the term. Goodness must be the result of free moral choice. Man chose evil, and the world became involved in sin. Now God is revealed to us as holy. Sin is utterly opposed to the essential character of God. As death is to life, or darkness to light, so are sin and evil to the holiness of God. Moreover, God is revealed as righteous, loving indeed, but never weakly lenient. The very character of God, then, required that some vast central cosmic act should occur in order to open up the way for sinful man to return to Him. Because God is holy, this was required. Because He is love, the form which this great act took was the giving of Himself in sacrifice. All true love must express itself in sacrifice. Divine love has expressed itself in the Incarnation and the Atonement. It was because " God so loved the world " that " He sent His only-begotten Son."* We see in the life and death of Christ the character of God revealed. We see the lengths to which the love of God can go. He chooses to bear the consequences of sin Himself, and to experience more than all the pain and sorrow which man has ever to bear. Free-will indeed He cannot remove: man is still free to choose the evil. The objective sacrifice has been made, and it has become possible for the holy God to receive man into union with Himself. But each man is free to walk or to refuse to walk in the path which has been opened up. Christ desires to be " lifted up " in the life of every member of His Body the Church, and so to " draw all men "† unto Him. Calvary and the Eucharist are one. On Calvary our Lord fulfilled the sacrificial system of the Old Testament. Himself

* John iii. 16. † John xii. 32.

both priest and victim, He voluntarily dedicated His life, and offered it before the eternal Father "once for all." At the Last Supper, as we saw, He had taken the elements of bread and wine, and they had become His Body broken and His Blood poured out. So in Calvary and in the perpetual offering of the same sacrifice at the altars of the Church is fulfilled for all time the whole sacrificial system.

"Beholding afar off" were many women who believed in Him; among them was Mary Magdalene, from whom He had cast seven devils.* Jesus had died unexpectedly soon; this, combined with the fact that at the moment of death He was heard to cry out with a loud voice, has led some to believe that He actually died of a broken heart. Joseph of Arimathæa, a member of the Sanhedrin, with great courage, went to Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. His request was granted, and he buried Him in a tomb "hewn out of a rock." The Gospels tell us nothing of the descent into Hades, but we learn from St. Peter's first Epistle that our Lord "preached unto the spirits in prison."† The efficacy of our Lord's saving work was not only to apply to the future, but also to the past. Those who lived under the old dispensation were to have an opportunity of hearing the Gospel and accepting the offer of salvation.

The genuine text of St. Mark's Gospel has only a very brief account of the Resurrection. Unfortunately the end of the Gospel is lost, and that which remains breaks off abruptly at verse 8, perhaps in the middle of a sentence.‡ The remainder of the chapter (verses 9 to 20) is a late addition, probably dating from early in the second century. Its con-

* Luke viii. 2.

† 1 Pet. iii. 19. The phrase is, of course, metaphorical.

‡ This break is made clear in the printing of the Revised Version.

sideration does not come within the scope of a book on *The Christ of St. Mark.*

When the Sabbath rest is over, the women come to anoint our Lord's body. They find the great stone rolled away from the entrance to the tomb, and they see a vision of a young man arrayed in a white robe. They are filled with awe in the presence of the supernatural. They have not only a vision, but also an "audition," and they run away in terror, afraid to speak of what they have heard and seen. At this point the story of the Christ according to St. Mark breaks off. At least we have a clear record of the fact of the empty tomb. Every attempt (and there have been many) to explain away the actual physical resurrection of our Lord's body founders on this rock. If the body had been stolen, why did no one produce it, and so quash once and for all this fantastic tale? That the apostles themselves should have hidden it, and then gone forth enthusiastically to the conversion of the world, is psychologically inconceivable. So cogent are these arguments that some have been driven to suggest that our Lord never really died on the cross, but merely swooned. We need not waste time in considering far-fetched theories of this kind. The death of Christ and His resurrection are well-attested facts, which all must accept, except those whose preconceived ideas preclude them from doing so, and who are therefore forced to search for an alternative theory.

* * * * *

The purpose of this little book has been to suggest lines of thought and to invite discussion. The book does not claim to have established any case. My hope is, however, that some readers who ponder on the words of this Gospel and their implications on the lines which I have suggested will come to such conclusions as these: The Gospel was written by one

who himself believed that Christ was God: there is nothing in it which is out of harmony with the doctrine of St. Paul's Epistles. Yet it bears unmistakable marks of being actual history: such realistic fiction as this would be was unknown in the first century A.D. Only the Catholic doctrine of two natures in one divine Person will suffice to explain the New Testament portrait of Christ, and that portrait is one congruous whole.

1. Jesus before Pilate.
2. The objective Atonement.
3. "Truly this man was the Son of God" (Mark xv. 39: cf. R.V. margin. Cf. also Luke xxiii. 47).
4. The descent into Hades.
5. The empty tomb.
6. The lost ending.

## Additional Note on Mark xi. 12-14.

This incident is frequently interpreted as being an "acted parable" symbolising the fruitlessness of Judaism and its consequent annihilation by the inauguration of the New Covenant. At any rate, it is the only instance of a miracle of our Lord which had no immediate function; even such evidently symbolic miracles as the turning of the water into wine (John ii. 1-11) were performed with an immediate end in view. A passage at the end of the *Didache*,* which deals with the functions of Prophets, says that one of the credentials of a prophet is his

* XI. 11. The *Didache* is a short Greek treatise, perhaps Syrian in origin, which was compiled by some Christian community probably about the beginning of the second century A.D.

ability to "celebrate a worldly mystery"—*i.e.* perform an acted parable. It seems probable that this idea was taken over from Judaism by Judaic Christianity (cf. Agabus, Acts xxi. 10 *f.*). If this is true, the significance of our Lord's acting a parable is deepened, since it implies that He is openly adopting the prophetic *rôle*. The events of Mark xi. 1-19 therefore give us three instances of our Lord's assertion of messianic authority: (1) He enters Jerusalem as Messiah-king; (2) He acts a parable, foretelling the end of the old dispensation, as Messiah-prophet; (3) He cleanses the Temple, as Messiah-priest.

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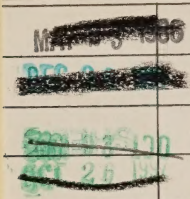

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